THE LIMESTONE TREE

JOSEPH HERGESHEIMER

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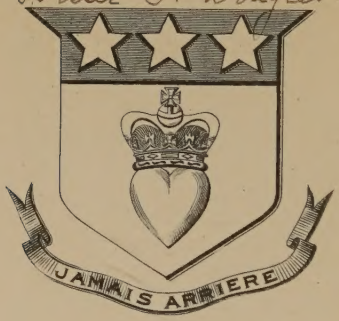

1931

THE LIMESTONE TREE

BOOKS BY

JOSEPH HERGESHEIMER

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THE LAY ANTHONY
MOUNTAIN BLOOD
THE THREE BLACK PENNYS
GOLD AND IRON
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THE LIMESTONE TREE

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FROM AN OLD HOUSE
SWORDS AND ROSES

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I

The French, who hunted and traded on the western waters long before the first Virginian pioneers forced their way through the dense laurel and rhododendron of the Appalachian Mountains to the sylvan and perilous region beyond the Ouasioto Gap, called those later adventurous settlers Les Kaintocks. The French and Indians—a phrase of complete unity—had already joined their temperaments and lives when, soon after 1730, John Sallings of Williamsburg in Virginia, on a hunting party to the salt licks of Kentucky, was captured by the Illinois Indians. It was not until 1769 that Daniel Boone, conducted by John Findley, followed him. Within the few decades that divided those events the French had fought the English and, in America, surrendered to them. The Kentuckians, unlike their white predecessors, joined with the Indians in nothing but battle. Both the spirit, the

convictions, of the new settlers and the French saw to that. There was, for a number of years, a brief destructive struggle, and then the Indians too were forced to surrender. They retreated to remoter forests and still more western waters.

The English, in America, conquered the French and Indians, and then it became necessary for the Americans to defeat the English; that, as well, with the assistance of France, they accomplished; and then Kentucky was actually born. It was settled and formed by men hardened to primitive existence and even more skillful than Indians in the woods. Kentucky was never, like the eastern part of Virginia, an English colony; it was, for a little while, an English county; but it was so far from Williamsburg, the seat of government—four hundred miles through the wilderness—that from the first it was independent of the Crown. It was composed, together with the bands of hunters, of soldiers, privates and officers, in the French and Indian War and of the Revolution. They were given bounties of Virginia land beyond the mountains; and their grants brought parties of surveyors to establish properties and lines.

They came upon a remarkable and beautiful land of extraordinary fertility—the limestone region of the Kentucky river. The bluegrass. It sustained crop upon crop of wheat and corn and tobacco, clover and hemp and rye. There was water everywhere and great salt springs. The forest was endless—sugar trees and blue ash, black locust trees and honey locusts with thorny spikes and broad pods, elms and hickories and walnuts, mulberry trees, pawpaws and buckeyes, groves of red cedar and

tall groves of tulip poplars. They stood, without underbrush, high and grave above a plane of shadow transfixed by bars of sunlight falling on the long fronds of ferns and on brilliant emerald green mosses. Impenetrable canebrakes were succeeded by the meadows of wild rye and buffalo grass, scarlet with cardinal flowers, along rivers flowing pure from the Appalachian east.

Its apparent tranquillity, however, was an illusion—it was the most fatal land on the circumference of the globe. The deep forest, the thickets of cane, the flowery meadows and shining rivers, were inhabited by a flitting and implacable evil, a painted furtive death on soundless moccasins. Kentake, the place of meadows and hunting ground, was so supremely dangerous that no Indians lived there. It had been too long a region of desperate struggle. The Six Nations, from the north, claimed the land; the southern tribes, the Catawbas and Cherokees, fought bitterly in the belief that it was theirs. The right to it was even more complicated, more difficult, than that—the Illinois confederation, tribes allied to France, sent war parties to secure their asserted property in the salt licks and game beyond the Ohio. The Six Nations, their canoes filling the Wabash river, brought that pretension to an end: the Kaskaskia Indians treated with the Mohawks and the confederation of Western Indians was destroyed.

In turn, by treaty at Fort Stanwix in 1768, the Six Nations withdrew; they removed north from the Kentucky river and from the Ohio; but that brought no safety to the early settlers from the Great Valley of Virginia and North Carolina. The Delawares and Piankishaws

on the north and to the east, the Wyandots on the west, the Chickasaws and Cherokees from the south, all opposed themselves to the fresh white invasion. They did this, for a while, with impressive success and by two ways—swift and secretive raids and in open battle. Indians waited in the canebrakes, they fired on solitary cabins from the edges of cornfields, and quickly vanished with new scalps at their belts. Or they lingered, when it was comparatively safe, and built the fires, at once ceremonial and practical, that quenched individual white aspirations to their hereditary lands. It was wholly wrong to suppose that the Indians were no more than furtive, that they only fought from ambush or by secretive raids. Under either French or British officers, or commanded by their own war chiefs, they charged massed troops and withstood advances with a high successful bravery. At the Lower Blue Licks one hundred and eighty-two men under Colonel John Todd of Lexington, Lieutenant Colonel Trigg of Harrodsburg and Colonel Boone of Boonesborough, urged forward by Major McGary, were defeated by a body of Indians in fifteen minutes. Sixty Kentuckians were killed outright, seven were captured and burned. From 1783 to 1790 Indians captured or killed fifteen hundred men and women and children; they stole two hundred horses and damaged property to the value of fifty-six thousand dollars.

In 1790 an elaborate retaliation was organized: Governor St. Clair, at Fort Washington, called upon Virginia for a thousand men and required Pennsylvania to furnish five hundred more. General Harmar commanded the expedition; it marched—the militia wretchedly equipped

and rebellious against service with regulars and under regular officers—to the Miami villages beyond the headwaters of St. Mary's river; and there an advanced detachment found the villages deserted. Harmar's orders provided, in the event of success, for a further advance against the Wabash Indians, but the unmilitary bearing of the militia—they permitted all their packhorses to be captured—made that impossible. Colonel Trotter went foward with three hundred men; he was withdrawn the following day to be replaced by Colonel Hardin; and immediately Hardin fell into an ambush from which he retreated in complete disorder. Twenty-four regulars and nine militiamen stood fast and were instantly killed. Captain Armstrong, in command of the detachment, sank up to the neck in a morass, and there, hidden by a thicket, he managed to remain safe.

The following year a still greater force, under Governor St. Clair, was sent against the Miami villages. It, too, was assembled at Fort Washington; the troops were gathered slowly, but by the end of summer St. Clair, with General Butler second in command, led an army that numbered twenty-three hundred. However, when they reached the Wabash river—St. Clair mistook it for a branch of the Maumee—there had been so many desertions, sixty of the militia at a time, that the force was reduced to fourteen hundred men. It was drawn up in two lines: the right wing, forming the first line, was composed of Butler's, Clark's and Patterson's brigades; the left wing and second line commanded by Colonel Darke. The right flank was covered by a creek, a steep bank and Faulkner's corps, the left protected by cavalry

picquets. The militia, in similar formation, occupied an advanced position; and, although they discovered strong bodies of Indians in the right, no information of this was sent to St. Clair; there was no redisposition of forces.

The Indians attacked just before sunrise, the militia fled through the ranks of the regulars, and, disorganized, ruined the plan of battle. The front and supporting lines, twenty yards apart, were simultaneously assaulted. Governor St. Clair escaped on a packhorse; more than half his army was killed. The retreat became a rout that extended for twenty-nine miles to Fort Jefferson; everything was thrown away and all weapons and ammunition, baggage and military stores, lost. An Indian killed and scalped General Butler while he was having a wound dressed. Buckongahelas, who planned the Indian attack, was dressed with extraordinary fineness—there were jewels in his ears and nose, his body was ornamented with silver medals.

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From the east the principal way to western waters lay through Cumberland Gap, by the Great Warrior's Path. Indian trails covered all the land east and west of the mountainous regions. Their immediate center was a war path reaching north and south throughout the long extent of the Appalachian Valley, and from that the Cumberland Gap trail led generally across the Kentucky basin. Other trails, where it ended, ran west, one falling into the Great Scioto trail that terminated at Fort Sandusky on Lake Erie.

All the early, the pioneer, roads followed buffalo traces or Indian trails. The buffalo traces were especially valuable because, where they were broad and hard, they invariably led to salt licks. They followed convenient ridges, but the Indian trails kept to water courses, where there was small trace of passage. These were either hunting or war, portage or trade, routes; and only the war paths were comparatively easy or suitable to use; the others, never over fifteen inches wide—for single file travel—wandered, apparently, in all directions and followed exceedingly rough and difficult ways.

The hunters and explorers and surveyors from the older Atlantic settlements came singly or in small companies over the Great Warrior's Path until Daniel Boone, in the interest of Colonel Richard Henderson, undertook to mark out a road in the best passage from Watauga through the Indian country to Kentucky. His trace led from the Watauga river, in Tennessee, to Moccasin Gap, there it met the Big Road from Philadelphia and passed on to Cumberland Gap. Beyond it followed the Great Warrior's Path, took to the buffalo trace that passed the Hazel Patch, and eventually arrived at Fort Boonesborough, where Otter creek empties into the Kentucky river. Boone's company held thirty men. They started on the tenth of March, 1775, and reached the Kentucky river the first day of April. They cleared two hundred and thirty-three miles of way in, practically, three weeks. For a hundred and seventy miles, a very heavy task, the trace was cut through dead brush; a thirty miles that followed was easier—thick cane and reeds; then appeared the pleasing and rapturous reward of the Kentucky plains.

After that settlements, at once isolated, precarious and determined, grew up on the Kentucky and Salt rivers and down the Ohio. In 1774 James Harrod, with forty men, left Red Stone Old Fort on the Monongahela and floated in pirogues down that stream and the Ohio to the Kentucky river. They continued to the Salt river, near McAfee's station, and rested at Big Spring, where they agreed to lay off a town. Isaac Hite, and eleven more men had appeared out of the wild; and, in small companies, they scattered, proceeding to improve their locations and build cabins. The dwellings were assigned by lottery; James Wiley's cabin, for example, was located three miles east of Harrodstown; James Harrod founded the Boiling Spring settlement, six miles south of his town, and proceeded to live there.

In June, 1774, Daniel Boone and Michael Stoner arrived at Harrodstown, sent by Governor Dunmore to spread the warning of impending Indian hostilities; Boone was given a lot; a double log cabin was erected; and, though he had no connection with it, named after him. Indian attacks began almost at once, and Harrodstown was largely deserted—part of the men returned to the eastern settlements, a few went to Fort Boone, a very few stayed in the four cabins that had been built. September, 1775, however, the settlers returned to Harrodstown. Hugh McGary from the backwoods of North Carolina, Richard Hogan, James Abel and Thomas Denton with their families united with Daniel Boone in Powell's valley, at the head of the Holston river; and, sending John Harman ahead to plant Indian corn at Harrodstown, they followed him three months later. At Dick's river Daniel

Boone and twenty-one men went to Boonesborough and the others continued to Harrodstown.

That winter the fort there was begun—it was finished the following spring, in 1776—on a hill by a splendid spring, and the town was permanently established. It was a simple fort and a simple town, surrounded by patches of corn, the open primitive forest, and a perpetual terror. The Indians continued to harass Harrodstown in both of the manners common to them—they descended with sudden yells out of the gray stillness of the early morning on lonely cabins and they invested the fort in force. There they were not successful. The fort was composed of two parallel rows of cabins, their outer walls joined by a high picket, blockhouses with projecting second stories occupied the four corners, the single wicket was strongly barricaded. Inside their fort the early inhabitants of Harrodstown were comparatively safe; they lived through long and stout sieges with hardly any mortality; but outside, in their close-lying fields and rude paths, they were not safe at all.

James Abel's cabin was on the south side of the town branch, a short but difficult run from the fort, and no member of his family ever went to bed or rose without speculatively gazing at the high defensive wooden wall above. It was a large family, for its resources and situation, the largest in Harrodstown. It included Sarah, James Abel's wife—she had been Sarah McKee; Nancy, who was sixteen; Louanna, newly fourteen; McKee, a son at the age of twelve; Bruton, a year younger; Kate who was nine and Flora seven. There were eight of them, and, while they were no worse off than their neighbors, and

no better, the cabin was without a tin cup or iron fork. But they, it must be admitted, were articles of luxury. James Abel, naturally, bore a scalping knife, there was a second knife in the cabin, and that was no mean fact. The cabin held little else beside an abundance of life. The implements of its manufacture were an axe, the adze and an auger. There were no nails. A table was made from a split and roughly hewn slab of wood, the legs no better than wooden pegs, the stools were quite the same, the beds, again, slabs of wood laid down on poles supported by forked sticks driven into the ground and by the cabin walls. The floor of James Abel's cabin was the hard earth, though he constantly promised Sarah, his wife, that he would cover it with puncheons. However, the mere making of that promise to a woman was considered, even by Sarah herself, to be very broadminded; the mention alone of such consideration was almost sufficient.

James and Sarah Abel occupied a bed, Nancy had a bed, the others slept on bearskins and, when it was essential, covered themselves with buffalo hides. Food, though, was splendid as it was plentiful—rich milk and fresh butter, wild peas and red and white mulberries, turkey and venison and beef, wheat ground on a hominy block, bolted through a gauze of silk and shortened with raccoon fat. Sarah Abel and Nancy spun and wove the materials of clothing; they made a linen from the lint of nettles, linsey from nettle lint and buffalo wool. The women had no need for hats—they tied bright cotton handkerchiefs about their heads; their underclothes were made of soft dressed doeskin; in summer they had bare feet and through the winter wore moccasins.

James Abel owned a linsey hunting shirt and a shirt of sewed skins, a pair of leather breeches, leggings and moccasins. When any one of these articles failed him Sarah and Nancy made another. He had a broadcloth coat with brass buttons—laid away in a linen sack—a formal hat made from splinters of wood rolled in buffalo wool and sewed with buckskin wang and a round fur hat for winter. He carried his tomahawk, naturally, at the right of his belt and the scalping knife on the left. His rifle was part of his dress.

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James Abel's family, in Ireland, were plain people. His father went early to the central region of Pennsylvania; James was born there, 1737, and they removed to Rockbridge county in the Great Valley of Virginia; in 1765 the Abels moved again—to the Holston country with a general emigration that began that year. Sarah McKee, James's wife, had a more impressive paternity: her own ancestors, strict Presbyterians of Galloway, had fought under the Lords of Lorn; their symbol was a cloudberry bush. Her father, after Boyne, in May 1729, sailed for Virginia on the George and Ann; the ship reached the coast of Pennsylvania in September; he stayed there with a number of Ulstermen and married; his wife died in childbirth and he went south to the Benjamin Burden Grant at the forks of the James river. He married again, his second wife and Sarah's mother, was a Garrand; and Sarah McKee met James Abel, a surveyor, at the Beverley Manor settlement on the South river.

She was, at Harrodstown, a gaunt woman neither tall nor short, with gray eyes and a gentle voice. It was evident that, in her early years, she had been better than pretty. All that, now, had gone—her feet and hands were disfigured by heavy toil; her face, unlike her voice, harsh and wasted; her hair was thin and colorless.

Nancy Abel, in the flower of her years, had a sharper voice than her mother's, and a sharper wit; she owned the McKee eyes, gray and fine, with the exception that Nancy's were handsomer than common, large and candid and level-gazing; but aside from that her face was ugly. Her body was strong and thin and ungracious—her shoulders displayed a pattern of bony ridges, her breasts were flat, and her legs awkward. James Abel was an unimpressive-looking man; he showed little indication of the endurance it was clear he possessed; and her body Nancy inherited from him. But in her case the mere frame was charged with the vital spirit of the Presbyterian soldiers of Galloway. She possessed, everyone who was familiar with her knew, a very black temper. Nancy could be, as well, amazingly tender and comprehending. They went by terms, the comprehension and the temper.

She owned a small wooden chest, given to her by William Pogue, who lived at Boonesborough and sold his buckets and milk pails, churns and tubs and noggins, up and down the Kentucky and Salt rivers, and in it she kept a scarlet wool dress, a linsey petticoat and a linen bedgown, three pairs of virginal stockings, and a coarse pair of shoes; a single white doeskin undershirt and buffalo wool drawers for winter. In addition to this she had two calico dresses, their colors lost in repeated washings

with strong lye soap, and a priceless length of pink ribbon.

That was all, but it was not, in Harrodstown, meager. She had no reason to be ashamed of such resources. Her sisters, Louanna and Kate and Flora, thought her possessions, her wardrobe in a whole chest of its own, were marvelous. They had far less. Almost, in fact, nothing. They were indifferently clad in calico, linsey and dirt. They were all, James and Sarah and Nancy, Louanna, McKee and Bruton, Kate and Flora, continuously dirty. That, in the first place, could not be helped, and in the second, except when it became too uncomfortable or publicly distressful, they never noticed it. A pail of the water, brought in a whisky barrel on a sled from the spring at the fort, served them in the morning; in the evening they were too tired, too sleepy, to do anything but take off some of their clothes.

Nancy Abel dominated her family; they were at once vain, boastful of her spirit, and afraid of it. She said far more to her father than her mother would have dared to try. But she was, in a quick impatient way, skilled in every duty of the house, in spinning and cooking and soap making. She made the best wonders in Harrodstown, cakes of flour and milk and spices boiled in fresh lard. That Nancy enjoyed; her spirit became as sweetly agreeable as the cakes; but soap making, with its burden of ashes and treacherous lye and fat, the labor of preparing flax for spinning on the little wheel—pulling it and laying it out to rot, breaking it and the swingling knife—brought about her illest tempers. On the other hand, in some secret feminine perversity of taste, Nancy liked to

shear the sheep and pick and card their wool. She would sit evening after evening, lost in a wordless and remote speculation, rolling wool, reeling it into skeins and, afterwards, winding it into balls for knitting.

James Abel owned thirty-five acres of land, it was very badly cleared, and the sheep's wool was continually matted with cockle burrs. A brook ran across the lower corner of the holding; there the sheep were washed, and there the younger children were commonly to be found. Nancy Abel sat with her legs straight out before her, her back against the smooth trunk of an old shell-bark tree, watching them play in the water. She was either totally relaxed, withdrawn, or sharply and wholly active. There was no medium ground in Nancy's character. Mostly she wondered about life and the world in connection with herself. It was, for one thing, time she got married—sixteen—and there were boys in Harrodstown who, they made it plain, were ready to like her if she would let them. But she pointedly wouldn't. Nancy was shyly and bitterly virginal. No masculine presence, no glance or touch, had moved her to any emotion other than an unreasonable contempt, an instinctive antagonism. A very nice boy, John Skelp, who had kissed her, afterwards told Nancy to her face that he would as lieve kiss a scalping knife. In return Nancy had been fierce. Who had ast him to try it, she demanded. She didn't want him akissing her. It was just a happen so he hadn't ketched a slap across his jaw.

That was her public attitude, but secretly she was in a great doubt. Seated against the shell-bark tree, with Bruton and Kate and Flora splashing in the brook, Nancy

was troubled. A big parcel of folks thought she was poison like an Indian. She didn't, actually, enjoy that realization. Hell, no! She wasn't really like a scalping knife. It seemed like she couldn't help being the way what she was. But that was only at times. I want to get married, Nancy informed herself, but I can't work along to it. When a boy sets up to me it puts me agin him. If I have a mind to or not. I don't want fer to be kissed. I ought to but instead I get sort of sick. "Flora," she called, "put your slip on back right off. There ain't a scrap of shame to you. You'll scare the squirrels out of the tree tops."

Nancy was half aware of the bells on the cows hidden by the woods; she could tell from their sounds which cow was feeding and which was moving about. A pack of girls she knew would be glad to have John Skelp kiss them. Well, he wouldn't kiss her again. She had cured him of that. Nancy wasn't depressed by the failure of any individual occasion, but at the same time she felt that something must be wrong with her. She had, for example, heard of love; she had heard of it but never seen it. Not what you might call by that name. The relationship between her father and mother hadn't no love to it. She could not remember when they had kissed each other. Not since Flora had been born to her knowledge. Likely it was longer back than that. They must have loved each other at first. Or else they couldn't have done what they did. No one could without—without something. Love or whatever it was. "Flora," she cried, "I'll wale God's liver outen you if you don't cover up your naked skin."

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At dusk a thunderhead swept down from the mountains in the east; there was sharp lightning and a continuous rolling thunder and then a hard crystal fall of hail. After the hail it grew colder; the Abel family fortified itself against the change in temperature with whisky from the half cask standing in a corner of the cabin. James Abel filled the noggin that rested beside the cask and drank slowly; Sarah followed him with a small measure; Nancy drank quickly—whisky in ordinary amounts had no perceptible effect on her—and the younger children followed in order. Flora choked, a bright scarlet flew to her face, and she immediately sank into a heavy slumber.

John Abel, James's younger brother, who had just arrived in Harrodstown, was critical of the local whisky. He had floated down the Monongahela river in a canoe from Red Stone Old Fort to the Ohio and Limestone; and he was, Nancy considered, unbearably set up because of his small adventures. In addition to this, she wondered if his stay with them would be prolonged. He had occupied her bed for two nights now. She did not like that and she did not like him. He was, for one thing, so smart. He had been learned at Fincastle, east of the mountains; and at nineteen, Nancy Abel could see, he thought he was the smartest man in all the western settlements. Everyone in Harrodstown was agin Colonel Henderson and his plan to own most everything and call it Transylvania, but John Abel defended it. If that was the way he felt why didn't he go to Boonesborough to onct and live with the Boones and Colonel Henderson. She guessed nobody here wouldn't miss him much.

Nancy was thankful for one thing—he didn't pay no

notice to her. If he had, uncle or no uncle, she'd have showed him. She could tell that he took fun at the way she said her words. He talked like the English minister, the Reverend Lythe, who was staying at Harrod's station with James Harrod. But he wasn't, Nancy contemptuously decided, handy; in a little some Delaware or Shawanese would ketch him wandering in the woods and lift his hair. "I hear," John Abel proceeded, seated in the bright light of a hickory bark fire, "that one of the hunters who came from the Holston country with Colonel Knox is in Harrodstown. The fact is, I saw him. He's about my age and by the name of Sash. Gabriel Sash."

Nancy speculated about Gabriel Sash; she knew vaguely that a party of hunters and trappers had explored Kentucky five or six years before; some had been gone such a piece they were called the Long Hunters. She would like to see one of them; he would have something to tell; it would be very different, too, from what you'd hear off a person who had only been a lawyer in Fincastle and seen Philadelphia. Gabriel Sash! She liked his name too. It was short and yet it wasn't so short. The Gabriel part was specially nice. There was an angel named Gabriel. Gabriel, blow on your horn! A golden horn, it was. A golden sound above the woods and rivers and cane.

When she first encountered Gabriel Sash—her father brought him to the cabin to dinner—she stared fixedly at her ten not immaculate toes. One big toe nail, she saw, was broke right off in half. She'd say something to her father for not telling them ahead. She couldn't do nothing now, with him there, in a cabin that had only one room.

She couldn't even put the pink ribbon on her hair. Gabriel Sash was taller than the Abel men; he was burnt by the sun to the color of a nigger or an Indian; his hunting jacket was worked with dyed quills like an Indian chief's; the scalping knife at his belt was long and thin and bright; the handle of a tomahawk painted red with figures, queer birds and the like, in black. Gabriel Sash's hair was dark and long; it curled a little and reached to his shoulders; and between its fall his face was thin like his tomahawk. He had a strange look out of his eyes, Nancy discovered —they went through you like bullets out of his rifle and didn't stop to take no notice on the way. Even drawed up to the table he sat lightly, gathered and alert, on the edge of his stool, distrustful of what might happen.

There was bear meat for dinner, hominy and salt-raised biscuits with butter and honey and milk, and wonders she had freshly boiled. Gabriel Sash ate four wonders. "Nancy cooked them," her mother said. Sash glanced at her briefly. James Abel asked about the trip to Kentucky in 1769. They had left in June, more than twenty of them, from Reedy creek, a branch of New river, and travelled by Cumberland Gap and the Great Warrior's road to Flat Lick. "We come over the Cumberland river at an old Indian fish dam. There was tall cliffs of rocks there and mountainy hills and everything else you could put a name to. But mostly briars and wild grape vines. We forded the south fork and camped in Price's Meadow, by a spring, where we built a depot and agreed to come back every five weeks. I hunted with John Rains and Obadiah Terrell. High grass you would never come to the end of.

"There were caves with human bones and salt licks

with bones bigger than a man's body. A parcel of the hunters went home and ten of us built two boats and two trapping canoes, and went on down the Cumberland. By God, we went down the Mississippi clear to the French fort at Natchez. I come up through the Indian country alone, and met Colonel Knox and Richard Skaggs and another or two on Laurel river. We went west, across over Rockcastle river and met along with a party of Cherokees. But they weren't a war party, and their head chief, Captain Dick, sent us up Skaggs' creek to the head, and beyond a bushy ridge, and like he promised we chanced on the prettiest river in the world. Deer and bear and buffalo on the meadows and in the skirt of the woods. Colonel Knox went east, but I stayed right along, by myself, and in seventy-one, the fall it was, Knox came back with packhorses, and we built a skin house on the Caney fork. We hunted the barrens right up to the Green river. We lost all our pelts, too, twenty-three hundred deer skins. They went rotten. Isaac Bledsoe said it was ruination by God. Some went back to the settlements and some stayed. But the Indians got Christopher Stoph and William Allen; pushed them full of fat pine splinters and lighted them up; the faster Christopher and William run the brighter they burned. We left camp after that, but we were back agin two months more. I found a tarrier I had lost wild as a wolf. It took me four days to feed and coax him back to my hand.

"Well, we moved on and built a little station—it wasn't nothing much—on Station Camp creek. We hardly got started when twenty-five Cherokees stole everything we owned; all our pots and kittles and clothes and five

hundred more deer skins. We couldn't keep nothing between one ruination and another. Joseph Drake diskivered Drake's pond. A great place for deer. And Isaac Bledsoe found a good salt lick. Drake is hunting that country now. That is, if the Cherokees have missed him. I told Joseph I'd be back." A silence fell on Gabriel Sash; he sat neglecting to eat; his gaze, his mind, evidently, were on far ponds and licks and rivers. Nancy Abel could see that he was remembering the years of his long hunting.

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When he had gone she went out back and sat under the shell-bark tree. The brook slipped by with a subdued murmur. It was, for onct, free of children. Gabriel. Gabriel Sash. His eye looked right through you and then kept on like nothing was there. It was a long dangerous trip from Natchez fort to the Kentucky settlements. Indian country all the way. Cherokees. You had to sleep with one eye open if you slept at all. It was funny about that, too—Gabriel Sash had been asked into near every cabin in Harrodstown, but he slept right out on the ground by the fort. Rolled in a blanket. He was skeered to stay in a cabin, Gabriel Sash said: it was like being caught by a bear trap. He had a big nose, with a hook to it; his eyes looked smaller than they were because he squinted them—just like he always had one fixed for the sights of his rifle.

He came to dinner again, and stayed through the afternoon; he was, Nancy realized, like her in one thing, he

was either entirely relaxed or all energy. But when he was relaxed the watchfulness she had noticed continued. It was mostly in his gaze. He glanced at her quickly and as quickly, apparently, withdrew every trace of interest from her. "It's nice here," he said, half lying at her feet and dropping small twigs and stones into the brook. "It might be you," Gabriel Sash said. "I never took notice to girls. It wouldn't be right. I got no life a girl could manage with."

A sudden sharp pain of unhappiness cut at Nancy. She was possessed by a desperate blundering courage. "Some yes and some no," she replied. "You might change a little," she proceeded. "Perhaps you'd come to like the settlements." He doubted it. "Take Harrodstown," Gabriel Sash explained, "there must be two hundred people in her right now. Two hundred! You'd be running into first one then another. A day wouldn't go by but you'd have your knife in somebody. It's different in the woods. No happen so people can be there. Just a little party of trappers, men you know about, or else nobody at all. Nobody in the world but a blue jay. You think it's a blue jay complaining, but maybe not, or you think a doe is calling her fawn. Maybe not. If so you're alone you listen and judge. You move away from your fire if you've got a fire. A little piece in the trees. You listen two hours, or three or four, or seven. For general you can out smart an Indian. Until your luck runs bad. That's what happened to Christopher Stoph and William Allen. That's how they come to get painted up with fire."

"Do you know when it happens?" Nancy asked.

"For general," he repeated; "you can't even cook

nothing but you black it. You can't seem to light a fire that won't smoke like a signal." His hand closed tightly on her ankle, formal in a yellow stocking. "You don't reckon you'd be bad luck?" he inquired. Indignant she drew her ankle sharply away from him. "What kind of a question is that?" Nancy demanded sharply. "There's plenty that have found me bad luck." He half turned away from her, and, resting on an elbow, Gabriel Sash gazed into the stream. Her resentment evaporated; she returned her ankle to where he could reach it. He continued to ignore her. Suddenly he rose and, without a word, left her.

Gabriel Sash came back the next morning. Nancy was carrying out tow linen to whiten in the sun, and he took the awkward burden from her. Kate and Flora followed them. "Go away," Gabriel told the children. "I don't know if it's bad or good," he said to Nancy Abel, "but you're my luck. Maybe, like you said, I can change. Maybe I can stay in Harrodstown without bringing trouble on you." He was very quiet. "I'll be your luck," she replied. "Good or bad. We will try to keep it good." When he left she went to her mother. "I am going to marry Gabriel Sash," Nancy said directly. "Well," her mother commented, "you got something to do with him. But then you will bring him as much and more. Life ain't never broke you none, Nancy; you're like a piece of hickory; it will be hard. I'll give him this—you are a good girl." She returned to a domestic preoccupation.

Nancy Abel remembered that on the day of her wedding. It took place in the cabin raised by the men of Harrodstown for Gabriel and for her. There was but one

room, smaller than her familiar home, and the roof had yet to be laid. It owned a present covering of brush. The cabin was filled with men and women and children drinking whisky and shouting and singing. Dinner was over. There had been beef, pork and fowls, venison both roasted and boiled, and bear meat, potatoes and cabbage. James Harrod was there, and two of the McAfees, George and Robert; Colonel John Floyd from Floyd's station on Beargrass creek; Colonel Henderson and Squire Boone; Daniel Boone was absent with a company of men making salt; William Pogue and his wife who had just moved from Boonesborough to Harrodstown; the Dentons, the McGarys, the Hogans, John Hayes—the entire neighborhood. They had eaten every scrap of the great supply of food and washed it down with whisky and water; with whisky; and, where the very young or very old were concerned, with a little naked water. A fiddle set up a shrill thread of rhythm; there were three and four handed reels, square sets and jigs.

It grew dark and candles were lighted and Nancy recalled what Sarah Abel had said to her—life ain't broke you none. You're like hickory. It will be hard. She noticed suddenly that the men, one by one, were slipping quietly as possible out of the door. Those whose movements were definitely uncertain were being urged and shoved, and even carried, outside. An overwhelming hot shame filled her. She wanted to run away forever, to hide and expire in the woods, but that, now, was impossible—the girls of Harrodstown gathered about her. "We're going to bed you," they chanted in a half savage and hysterical gaiety. "You're going to get bedded for Gabriel

Sash." Nancy cried out, "Don't one of you lay a hand to me. Not one of you." Mary Hite and the Harlan girl, both heavy and strong, caught hold of her. Mary dragged off one of Nancy's shoes and Nancy kicked her violently in the stomach. That made Mary Hite sick at once. Other girls overcame Nancy. Her other shoe was gone, her stockings ripped off. She dug her fingernails into a fat red cheek and there was a screech. Someone hit Nancy on the head with the heavy noggin from the whisky barrel. There were other screeches and cries and God's enough of cursing.

At last, in a new linen bedgown, she was bedded. She was alone. There were shouts and curses outside; the cabin door was wrenched open and Gabriel Sash, all but naked, was actually hurled into the room with her. He was very drunk and so he sat on the floor. Nancy Sash, her knees drawn up within the clasp of her hands, watched him with a troubled intentness. There were more shouts, a mocking laughter, outside the cabin, and then part of a ballet:

"When Joseph was an old man, an old man was he,
He married Virgin Mary, the Queen of Galilee."

The singing and laughter moved away into the night; the stillness of the land surged back and folded the cabin about. Nancy waited a long while, and then she spoke, "Gabriel," she said. He moved and stared in the direction of her voice. "Good or bad," he said, "here it is." He rose, very uncertainly. "Damn it," he cried, "I didn't want for it to be like this. I'm drunk." He sat beside her, his head on his chest, a hand in hers. His face was hidden

in his long hair. "A bear trap," he half whispered. Tears ran over Nancy's face. It was such a hard thing to say on her wedding night. Gabriel fell forward; his head rested on her arm. A great tenderness swept aside all her other emotions, a choking need to keep Gabriel close and warm and safe. To make him happy. She must, above everything else, stay him from the woods where death made trickery sounds like does calling their fawns. Gabriel wouldn't never—not now—need to be alone again.

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Gabriel Sash's cabin, on the road to Harrod's station, was farther from the fort and Big Spring than any of the other dwellings in the settlement; it was so removed from the main body of cabins that it was considered precarious; but Gabriel would have it no nearer. As it was, he said, he could scarcely drop a free foot. Directly after his marriage he addressed himself, with assistance, to the improvement of his property. The roof was completed, a cats-and-clay chimney carried up to the ridge pole, and a small log barn built for the cattle. They had a few sheep, a gift from James Abel; Gabriel had managed to secure a middling poor cow and an aged horse for ploughing. Nancy cooked with an attentive skill; there were boiled wonders and the deer and wild turkey Gabriel killed; and, Nancy could see, he began to get some fat on him. He was, she thought, very contented, absorbed in his settlement life; only his eyes continued to pierce beyond the bounds of his present ease. Gabriel hunted early in the morning; he never failed to return with what he

had gone out to shoot; and then—when the building was finished—he sat on his heels, motionless and silent, for hours, smoking a small redstone pipe with a reed for a stem.

Nancy performed practically every domestic duty: she bore the water from a spring; she moved heavy loads of ashes for the hateful operation of making soap; she even repaired the clapboard roof. Gabriel took this for granted. James Abel was stirred into speaking to her about it. "You're not a squaw," he pointed out; "but an Abel and a McKee. Let Gabriel holp with the fetching and carrying." He would gladly, Nancy explained. "It's just that he never thinks of it. I'd liever do it than ast him." She was absolutely happy. She no longer thought of love, wondered about it; Nancy lived without consciousness of words or states of being; her existence was too complete for that. She grew thin, as Gabriel Sash became fatter; then Nancy told him they were going to have a child. He heard that information philosophically. "It's nature," Gabriel said briefly, his pipe in a hand. Then he resumed smoking.

"Gabriel," Nancy demanded later, "what is it takes your mind while you sit and sit?" He didn't rightly know. "A lot of not much—the big buffalo trace to the Lower Blue Lick and the flats along the river filled with herds of buffalo. The elk around the salt springs. I study on how Joseph Drake is making out and I consider about Indians." Nancy asked, "Don't you never think of me? Of us, Gabriel. There is going to be three soon." A momentary gaze rested on her. "You're right here in front of me," he replied: "there's no secret in it. I don't

have to find sign, like with Indians, to know about you." That answer satisfied her. She only wished his eyes would stay in the cabin—they looked through her, through the walls of logs, beyond the endless woods. Nancy began to hate the woods; she would not, in the dim morning, watch Gabriel vanish among the trees. She waited on the doorstep for hours to see him reappear. It wasn't that she was afraid of Indians—Nancy had a strong faith in his ability to defeat any number of them—no, it was different from Indians. She couldn't put a name to it. For one thing, especially now when she was so big with her child and clumsy, she could not be with him in the woods. There Gabriel escaped from her. She had a feeling that, in the depth of the forest, he never spared her a thought. That, however, was natural—if he walked mooning through the Kentucky woods he would never get back to the settlements and to her.

Now and again John Abel stopped to talk to her; her dislike for him, since he no longer kept her out of her bed, had largely evaporated. She even envied him his learning, his command of words. He had gone to Boonesborough as a delegate from Harrodstown to Colonel Henderson's meeting. Everyone admitted John Abel's intelligence. Nancy's dislike for him, however, had been intensified and transferred to Gabriel. He was very bitter about her uncle John. The truth was that Gabriel hated and suspected all educated people; he wouldn't, he asserted, have a book inside his cabin. Unless chance it was a Bible. Even where Bibles were concerned he preferred the French habit of letting the priests read and tend to them. Nancy, although she cared little enough for reading,

had a feeling that Gabriel was wrong. "If we have a son," she said, with no small measure of courage, "I want for him to be a lawyer or a trader."

"Why don't you put it Cherokee or Delaware?" Gabriel Sash demanded. "He'd be as good one of those as the other. I'd likely kill a boy who favored John Abel. If he was my son. Look at Harrodstown now," he proceeded, with an uncommon vigor of speech: "there are so many in it, and all talking to onct, you can't make out what any says. It's not like an Indian council. There's some order with that; it sounds like a lot of turkey gobblers around here. Then there is too many wimmen. You can't feel safe with such a parcel of helpless mouths if you have to take to the fort for three or four months. What you want is rifles not wimmen. Anyways, they say too much. A woman if she don't work she's poison." Nancy Sash listened to her husband carefully: she understood that he must say what he said; he was like that; but in her heart she did not agree with him. Time will change Gabriel, she thought hopefully; the times will make him different.

Nancy was glad that more and more people were coming to Harrodstown and Boonesborough and Colonel Logan's station. They seemed to move the woods farther back from her cabin, from her life and from Gabriel. The earlier sense of peril was a little modified. Things were nicer about the house, too—tin cups were almost plentiful; she owned three pewter plates. Small supplies of merchandise had begun to arrive from Fort Pitt—printed chally and soft merinos, simple hardware and glass and small pieces of crockery, some drugs and dyes,

foolscap, wafers, slates and pencils. Existence, Nancy found, was beginning to be easier. Gabriel, however, would permit no innovation in his life. In the morning Nancy laid a buckeye backlog and a hickory front stick on the stone andirons of her hearth, and then baked a johnny-cake on a white ash board. She hung the tea kettle from a wooden lug pole. In the evening she'd swing the iron mush pot and supply it with water and again draw the black Bohea tea.

Yes, she told herself, Gabriel would change; he couldn't be the only one to stay like it used to be. He did, though, seem to accomplish exactly that—he wore his scalping knife and the tomahawk with the red haft; he wouldn't cut off his hair but kept it swinging on his shoulders like an Indian; Nancy had made him a new hunting shirt worked with quills colored yellow from a walnut bark, blue from a boughten indigo and red with madder, and he took great pleasure in it. She couldn't get a coat on him. Anything that bound or limited Gabriel Sash bothered him out of endurance. He continued to be scared of walls like bear traps. Gabriel will change, Nancy repeated to herself. He will have to. Then he stayed for a whole night in the woods.

He was remorseful when, the following morning, he returned. "I had no rights to do it," Gabriel admitted. "Only I knew you were safe. There was no Indian sign." Nancy said nothing in return; she didn't let Gabriel see how deeply she had been troubled. Dread in place of sleep had settled upon her. She began to think about love again. Love and what it was. She said to herself experimentally that Gabriel loved her. There was,

naturally, no answer from the silence of the forest everywhere about her.

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Her son was born in winter, past the middle of December; the earth held an immaculate burden of snow; above it the cane stood high and feathery and green; the mistletoe was green and white; winter grapes hung from the trees in dark clusters; the seeds of the Indian arrow wood turned scarlet. Nancy called their child James, after her father. She had first proposed to name him Gabriel, but Gabriel Sash would not consider that. It was too late, he declared, for any more Gabriel Sashes. Nancy, immediately upon her marriage, had discovered that he was immovably silent about his connections and his past. He commonly met questions with the brief and unilluminating fact that he had come out of the woods. The further truth was that, even with Nancy, Gabriel did not encourage intimacy. A great deal of him stayed apart from her and from the life around them. His silence grew longer, if anything, and more impenetrable.

It accomplished nothing, she discovered, to get mad at him; he wouldn't get mad back; that was all there was to it. When she raised her voice in a shrill complaint, or overwhelmed him with a bitter and robust cursing, he attended her with no more than a slow curiosity. It wasn't in him, apparently, to be fretted by a woman. Not so long as she attended to her—and to most of his—affairs. Nancy met her obligations fully; she was convinced that if she failed there Gabriel would take a hand

to her. It was probable he would beat her. He admitted freely she was an able woman. When spring arrived Gabriel ploughed the land for Indian corn and sowed the seed, he planted muskmelon and turnips; and then, at the end of a day in May, he spent a long while tending his rifle, swabbing and greasing it, and examining its lock and flints. He hefted his bullet pouch, examined his powder. Finally he turned to her.

"I'm nothing better than a Cherokee," he said; "I'm lower than an Indian; I'm the lowest white man in Kentucky." Nancy put aside the coarse white muslin she was fashioning for their child. She regarded Gabriel Sash, her husband, intently. "I'm going away," he continued wretchedly; "back in the woods to Dick's river and Joseph Drake if happen he's alive. I've tried the settlement for a year or worse and I can't make her. I'm a failure here and I'm a failure with you. I can't take to living in a house. I don't want for you to strive like you do. All I need is a little fire and some tea and a piece of venison twisted about the end of my ramrod. That is all." She started to speak but he silenced her. "Take what you onct said about baby James, before he was born, that you wanted him to be learned and maybe a lawyer. I said I'd likely kill him if he favored John Abel. I was wrong. He will favor John Abel. I wouldn't be nothing to him then. I wouldn't be nothing to you. I belong in the woods. With the buffalo and the elk. That's my luck good or bad."

"I don't believe it's your luck," she cried back at him. "Onct you said bad or good I'm your luck. Anyways, I'm your wife. Here's your child. You can't leave us."

"I belong with the buffalo and the elk," he repeated. He had laid his rifle on the floor, and he picked it up again, fingering the walnut, brass-bound stock and barrel. A complete hopelessness settled over Nancy. She realized that there was nothing she could say or do that would keep him. She had never possessed him. She saw now why she dreaded the woods—the woods had always possessed Gabriel Sash. Something in them. She hadn't been able to cure him of the habit, the need, of loneliness. Of silence. Gabriel, in turn, had in his heart dreaded the settlement, and it was an inescapable fact that she was part of Harrodstown. She wondered if he would consent to take her away with him and actually make her his squaw? At the same moment a different quality, as hard and demanding as Gabriel's own, took hold of her—she would not drag her child at his heels through the wilderness. She might leave little James with her mother; Nancy wanted to do that; a deep stubborn instinct defeated her again.

"When will you go?" she asked.

"The field is ploughed and seeded, and the turnips and muskmelons in. Tonight," he replied. She rose. "I must make you some johnny-cake," Nancy asserted. Gabriel Sash nodded. She gathered wood on the hearth, and Gabriel, with his flint and steel, set it on fire. She addressed herself to making a batter. One thing she knew beyond all doubt—Gabriel would never come back. Nancy was, in the face of that realization, strangely quiet. It wasn't like her. She even wondered how she would get along. Probably go back to her father's cabin, but tend the truck planted in her own ground. It was

thought to be almost safe now to walk from one part of Harrodstown to another. "I haven't nothing to leave you," Gabriel admitted. "I don't want nothing," she replied fiercely. "You don't know much," she went on, "or you'd never said that. But you never knowed about women. What they want. It didn't come into your head I might kill you. I could do it easy enough." Gabriel agreed that she could. "Nor I wouldn't blame you," he continued. "Life's a chance even in a settlement." He crossed the earthen floor of the cabin to where his son was sleeping. Gabriel Sash stared down at him for a long while. "Lawyer Sash," he said in a tone of speculation; "lawyer James Sash."

There was only a single tallow dip lighted, the fire for the johnny-cake had died away, and Gabriel was almost lost in the shadows. Suddenly Nancy felt that her face was wet with tears. She had nothing to do with them; she had no intention of crying; she wept silently without emotion or relief. Hopelessly. Gabriel, completely silent in moccasins, returned to where he had been sitting. "You'll get a right man," he told her. "Fitten for the settlements. You're rid of me good." Nancy didn't answer that.

"Why don't you go to bed," Gabriel suggested.

She remained silent.

The tallow dip—it was on a board let in a chink above the fire-place—flickered precariously. She could barely see Gabriel Sash. His face was hidden in his dark cloud of long hair. Her baby cried out and then fell quiet once more. Only a little glow showed on the limestone hearth. That went out. The light flared up with a brighter

audible flame and utter darkness filled the cabin. A new fear enveloped Nancy, a sudden cold dread of existence. She wanted to cry out for Gabriel, beg him to stay close to her, to save her from unbearable terror. She didn't make a sound; it would be useless. The night was hot and the doors of the cabin were open, but it seemed to Nancy that she was shut into a blackness where there wasn't a breath to catch. She was suffocating. A sudden sense of loneliness touched her. Somehow the cabin was different. Empty. She knew. Gabriel Sash had gone. A chuck-will's-widow sounded faint and sad outside. Only sometimes it wasn't a chuck-will's-widow. You had to move away from your fire. Listen. That was in the woods. She gathered little James up and sat with him on her lap. His breathing was at once soft and troubled. Her own breath was still labored and her heart was pounding like on a hominy block. She wouldn't ever more pound hominy, make johnny-cake, for Gabriel. He had gone back to the dark secretness he come from. Him and Joseph Drake. The Long Hunters. Her tears had stopped; her cheeks were hot and dry. Anger cut like a knife into the dull hopelessness of her suffering.

II

EARLY of the summer, 1788, James Abel sat in the doorway to the principal part of his double cabin and reflected upon his life and the confusing events that were multiplying around it. No one, he concluded, could stay clear about the happenings in Harrodstown, let alone what generally was going on in the world. For one thing, in a very few days, he would be fifty years old. That of itself was amazing. Fifty! Why, it didn't seem no time since, with his family, he was settling in Harrodstown. It appeared hardly back of yesterday when him and Colonel Harrod and Hugh McGary and the others raised the cabin with one room he afterwards added and added to. Sarah, his wife, had seen it larger than it were at first—a shed kitchen to the back and a garret; but that was all; she had died in 1783; it was not until three years later he had finished it like it was. He would, James Abel realized, do no more. It was plenty big for his family now, and

soon—if, to be exact, Nancy, his oldest daughter, married Doctor Mackenny—it would be too big. That would leave only him, McKee and Flora. Kate, married to Beriah Mace, was living in the Sash cabin at Harrodstown; Louanna had removed to Lexington with her husband, Pearce Salkead; Bruton's wife—she had been Mary Delaunay—had persuaded him to settle on Pottinger's creek, where her family had gone with a parcel of other Roman Catholics from St. Mary's county in Maryland.

At present, however, his cabin was full right up to the ridge pole, now that his brother John had returned from New Orleans with a foreign wife, their child and a nigger slave. They occupied the whole of the other part of his dwelling. But they wouldn't, not if he knew Nancy, stay there for long. That realization, and his daughter's character, tickled him; he minded when John Abel had first come to Harrodstown—back around 1776—and kept Nancy out of her bed for a spell. Nancy had been pretty free with her tongue about that and about her Uncle John. It was different now. It wasn't John who upset her but John's wife, Laure. The minute Laure come into the house he, James Abel, had seen the two women would not get along. If John soon doesn't move his family somewheres else, he reflected, it will be real bad. The truth was he did not take to Laure Abel, the foreign woman, himself. He didn't set no piece on her ways. She was too lazy, for one. Laure not only let the nigger, Arabela, tend her child; Nancy asserted that the slave actually dressed Laure. She had seen Arabela on the ground before her mistress drawing her silk stockings over her legs. Putting on her slippers.

James Abel didn't hold with that no more than Nancy did. Anyhow, it waren't right in Kentucky. In Kentucky they had had a middling hard time; nor it wasn't, account of the Indians, getting easier; everybody had to be considerable and tend to themselves. John Abel had been back in Harrodstown less than a week, they'd had no pointed talk yet, but it was evident John had a lot to say. He had gone to New Orleans with Jacob Yoder, in the broadhorn Jacob had built at Red Stone Old Fort on the Monongahela; they floated down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers with a cargo of flour and swapped it for buffalo skins and mink and beaver; Jacob Yoder proceeded to Havana and traded the skins for sugar and sold that cargo in Philadelphia; but John had stayed and married in New Orleans. Six years he had been gone. He was back, at last, with Colonel Wilkinson. James had heard surprising rumors about Colonel Wilkinson's success in New Orleans; because of that, Wilkinson's friends asserted, the Mississippi river would soon be open again to the navigation of Kentucky cargo boats. His brother John would explain all that. John Abel, James recognized, was one of the best explainers alive.

Yes, it was all very confusing, the state of his own affairs and the doings in the world. He continued, for the moment, to study on the wider aspects of existence—the newly adopted Federal Constitution for example. Kentucky had voted agin it and he wasn't sure but that she was wrong. What, after all, had they fit England for? Why, to have a country of their own, that's what they fit for. And now, when they had a chanct to have a country, where was the sense voting contrary? He couldn't

for the life of him see. They didn't have no right government now, with the way the different parts of the land helt out agin all the rest. There wasn't a decent agreement to them. Massachusetts acted like South Carolina were the French and Indians, and you couldn't tell was Philadelphia in America or wasn't it. James could not, either, see why Congress made such a fuss about admitting Kentucky into the Confederated States; the United States of America, rather. Rightly she hadn't been no part of Virginia since Daniel Boone cut the Wilderness road through Cumberland Gap and along the Great Warrior's road. If Kentucky didn't get to be a state pretty quick, and have the power to levee troops, there wouldn't be no Kentucky. The Indians would see to that.

Look at how four hundred of them under Blackfish, with Frenchmen and a French officer, like to burned up Boonesborough. Colonel John Bowman's expedition against Old Chillicothe didn't come to nothing. Take the seventy men who put out from Fort Pitt for New Orleans in two keelboats. Indians surrounded them on a sand bar nigh the Licking river and only twenty escaped. Then six hundred Canada soldiers and Indians, with English officers, captured Ruddle's and Martin's stations. Estill's defeat come in there somewheres. The bastards fair to swarmed about Bryan's station, with a British major and Simon Girty to lead them, and even if they were driv off there they were. Out of a hundred men and better the savages fired on travelling down the Ohio forty-two were killed and more taken prisoner. Only last March the Indians like to surprised Harrodstown and be the ruination of it. God, he could go on and on this way

without never stopping. The Indians murdered Colonel John Floyd. Five years back. James Abel remembered him clear. Colonel Floyd had come to Nancy's wedding. Soon after that Indians stole sixty horses from about Limestone. They scalped Colonel Christian and General Clark's big expedition against them, with a thousand rifles, didn't skeer an Indian.

If the new government, the Constitution, did not act quick why Kentucky would be forced to watch out for herself. That possibility made him uneasy. James Abel didn't like the sound of it. There was only one other way for Kentucky to turn—toward the south. To Spain. He did not like foreign countries or ideas any better than he liked foreign women. His thoughts returned to his own concerns. He was, he hoped, a fair man, especial with his own kin; he didn't know what it was about Laure Abel; but there it was. She made him uncomfortable. Her dresses, fine embroidered muslins mostly, somehow were not fitten for a married female. Very often they did not even aim to cover her shoulders. Very often they only half aimed to cover her breasts. Whatever could you tell about a woman hiding her face in a black lace shawl and a gold comb sticking out of her hair the width of your palm? Nothing was what.

All he hoped was that Nancy, who had a dark temper to her, would behave right with her Aunt Laure long as John stayed with them. He had his doubts about this; Nancy was like Kentucky where the United States were concerned—she was ready to tear up things, take the war path, on her own account. James saw that Laure, in a totally different way, was capable too. Nancy had a dark

temper but Laure Abel was wicked. She minded him of a copperhead snake, smooth and quiet with poison.

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James Abel's thoughts gathered still more particularly about himself; they were centered upon his store—it was at once a store, a tavern and a lodging place—in Harrodstown. It had done, the truth was, very well indeed. He had become one of the important men of the settlement. It wasn't, of course, nothing to compare with James Wilkinson's trading station in Boonesborough; it could not measure up to Daniel Broadhead's commerce in Louisville; but he was more than satisfied by his success. A good deal of this was due to his son-in-law, Beriah Mace. Beriah was his partner, and, although he was fifteen years younger than him, James admitted to himself that Beriah was three-quarters of the trading anyways. He owed something, as well, to his brother John. It was a question if John hadn't first suggested the store. He still kept an interest in it; one of the motives that had carried John Abel to New Orleans with Jacob Yoder had been to discover if merchandise could, with any safety at all from Indians and with profit, be poled up the western waters to Harrodstown. By the time anything at all was carried by wagons from Philadelphia over the mountains to Fort Pitt, sent down the Ohio river to Kentucky, it was either spoiled, stole by the Indians or cost too dear to make on.

Now, he told himself again, his brother John would have the rights of it. Unfortunately, there were still other difficulties with his business. Take money. Or, rather, a

person could not take money, for the simple reason that mostly it didn't exist. When it did, in the shape of Spanish silver dollars, they were so cut into bits nobody could weigh or value them. Aside from that there were wild animal pelts—and deer skins worth less every month—land warrants that had no certainty to them, and warehouse receipts for tobacco. Beaver skins—everyone knew that a beaver skin was reckoned at six shillings—were coming to be scarce. It got so he didn't know at times if he were in money or out. It was wonderful, though, what he had for sale; he regarded his stock and Beriah Mace with a pleased amazement. You could go into the store and buy window glass. Plenty of the cabins in Harrodstown had windows with glass. Anybody who wanted them could get nails. Ten year ago there wasn't a nail in the settlements. Now forks and tin cups were common. James remembered when, in his own cabin, there was a wooden noggin made by William Pogue at the whisky barrel; now the whisky barrel at the store, where everyone was welcome to drink, had a bright tin cup fast to it.

But the biggest change, James Abel considered, had to do with the women. There was muslin pants for them, when once they had to manage with sewed doeskins; there was French stockings and shoes you couldn't walk out in but what you would spoil them; linen was no longer made from nettles; buffalos were about gone and so there was no buffalo wool for linsey woolsey. It wasn't needed, James added. You hardly ever saw a person breaking and rotting flax now; he doubted were there a dozen people in Harrodstown who knew what a swingling knife was.

Even the loom in his house stood bare three months at a time. The spinning wheels had more stillness than hum to them. He was half critical about it all; and yet, he added, it was progress; he was helping to bring it about.

There was a stir at his back, he half turned in his hickory chair, and saw that it was his daughter Nancy. Time, and her trouble, he realized, had not favored her. But then Nancy had always been spare, hard-featured; it was her spirit that made her considerable. Still. Gabriel, her husband, leaving her in the night, so soon after they married, hadn't touched her there. She sat on the stone doorstep, at his feet. "I saw Beriah in the store," Nancy told him; "he said him and Kate would be here for supper. That makes—how many does it make?" She paused and counted. "Eight with everybody," she announced; "they must think I spend the afternoon preparing for them. I could do it ready and willing if Laure Abel would help. It ain't she'd be useful, I just get fretted at her sitting around with that black woman to do for her."

"That will soon be over," her father reassured her. "Your Uncle John can't stay here now he's regularly back. Either he'll live in Boonesborough, where Colonel Wilkinson is, or take part in the store and raise a house near. He ought to say which soon. Likely we'll get a chance to speak tonight. Where is young James?" Her son, she replied, was helping to repair the pickets at the fort. "He is always up at the fort or in the woods, and nothing does but he must wear the hunting shirt I made him with the colored wool sewed to it." She fell silent. James Abel could see that she was thinking about Gabriel

Sash. It was twelve years ago Gabriel Sash deserted her. Went back to the woods. The Indians had long ago taken his scalp. He said something like that—but not quite like it, of course—very often to her. He insisted that Gabriel Sash was dead. It wasn't in reason for him to stay alive hunting the Indian country, right among the Cherokees, all this time. James Abel wanted Nancy to marry Doctor Mackenny; the doctor had been setting up to her now for near six years; he was a good man; and, one or the other, she ought to give him an answer. Nancy, though, wouldn't be sensible about it. She was not sensible about Gabriel Sash. Her head were full of queer ideas where he come in. Nancy seemed to put more store on Gabriel away from her than she did on Mackenny who was right beside her in Harrodstown. The doctor was older than James would have chosen for Nancy; he admitted to over fifty; but then she wasn't a girl any more. She was fifteen or sixteen when she was married, in 1776. Nancy was twenty-eight now. He grew impatient thinking about her foolishness with Doctor Mackenny.

"The doctor didn't come by today," he observed; "now I think on it he wasn't here yesterday. Like as not you lost him." Her expression was totally indifferent. "It's flying in the face of providence," James Abel asserted. "A man like him. With the respects of everybody. Not that I want to be rid of you. Don't take no notion I do. I was wondering a piece back, setting here, how I'd make out if you were gone. Flora's nothing you could mention tending to things or cooking. Chance she'd hire a body to help her. Like Laure does. It would never be the same without you. I was only thinking for you."

He wouldn't even put on his new fustian roundabout without complaining, Nancy added, still concerned with her son.

"Doctor Mackenny is a good man," she admitted suddenly; "he's kind and he would provide for you. More than that, he understands about a woman. He'd never worry her like other men do. But what does it matter if he wouldn't, if he did provide all you'd need and more? What does it matter? Can you tell me that? There's Gabriel—he didn't provide a thing; he wouldn't stir his hand to keep me from carrying water the long piece from the spring; all he did was sat on his heels and smoke his little red pipe. Yet he is in my mind twelve years. I can see him like he was you right now, with his thin dark face like a tomahawk, his long dark hair aswinging on his cheeks."

"It's just a crazy notion you've took," her father replied sharply; "it is fortunate for the others of us, but not where you come in. You work too hard here; you have worked too hard all your life; it would be different with the doctor." Once more, gazing at her rough, scarred hands, she asked what it meant. He didn't know what she meant, he asserted, almost angry. It was his idea nobody knew what nothing meant now.

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The sky darkened early, threatening a storm, and Nancy lighted the two boat lamps hanging on their short chains at places of advantage on the walls. James Abel sat at the head of the family gathering; Laure was beside

him and so was Kate, his daughter; Beriah Mace faced him from the other end of the table. Flora, James noticed, had the discontented look to her which, lately, had grown so common; Flora, he realized, was a pretty girl; she was high-handed with the young men of Harrodstown and, as a result, she wasn't married yet. Right now she were two year older than Nancy when she took Gabriel Sash. All his children were deliberate marriers. McKee, too, at twenty-four, was single. He was beside Laure Abel, and he was more than particular, polite, with her. James Sash, in the hunting shirt that was a copy of his father's, sat with his eyes fastened on the foreign woman. James hardly noticed his mother when she spoke to him; he moved a shoulder, sharp and impatient, when she touched him, commanding him to take his supper. He was, his grandfather considered, a fine figure of a boy; he had inherited from his mother the McKee eyes; they took something off his father, too—a steady narrowed gaze like he was sighting a rifle. James remembered that look in Gabriel Sash. The boy, in addition, had pale hair and the wiry deceitful endurance of the Abels.

A thin ray from a lamp struck on the tall gold comb that Laure wore. She had put off for supper the black stuff that usually hung about her face. Some, James realized, would call her considerable looking; he reckoned there was looks to her; but that was far as he'd go. He didn't take to her kind of appearance. For one her neck was too thin, he could almost span it with a hand; then her face was too dark for him. It was a strange darkness: James Abel had seen yellow peaches just such a color; and he couldn't abear her eyes—they were black

as powder, blacker even than her hair, and at the same time they had a shine to them. Now he come to think of it she was the only female he remembered who looked right into his face. Sarah's gaze had dropped when it met his. That were modest, decent; but, James realized, there wasn't any modesty along with Laure. The harder you stared at her the wider her black eyes opened; there was, with it all, a little red smile on her lips.

She was speaking in a slow and careful English. "It was natural I come here, to Kentucky, with my husband. He is my husband. I will like it, some day, everyone is kind to me, but I'll always regret New Orleans. It is so gay. Music everywhere and dancing and games. In the evening the Grand Chemin, the levee, is fine with beautiful dresses and officers in green coats, the negroes are always laughing. You should see them—Danse Calinda, Boum-boum, Boum-boum." At the table, before them all, Laure Abel sang a strange song:

"Mouché Préval
Li donné grand bal.
Li fait nèga payé
Pou sauté ain pé."

She went on, "The gentlemen gamble at the Maison Coquet and drink chocolate and play dominoes at the Café del Aguila on Chartres Street. Or they stop at Thiot's and order le petit gouave. New Orleans is happy, and, when I remember Louisiana, Kentucky seems so—so sad. The forest is sad and there are always the Indians." She was gazing, James Abel saw, at Nancy Sash. Nancy was looking at the edge of the table. "The pleasures here

are very few," Laure continued. "God will not strike you dead if you laugh. He has even appointed feast days."

"We have feast days," Nancy replied suddenly. "But they are different from yours. We have to set the feasts out ourselves. There are no Arabelas to help us. We had to fight all the time; it's some better now; but it's bad enough. And God is different in Kentucky from what you think in New Orleans. He's a hard God but righteous, not a sparrow falls yet He knows it, but sin and lightness He hates and punishes. His way is like a trace through the woods, narrow and weary to follow. There's no grand levee in Kentucky; the only soldiers in green coats were the Canada officers bringing the tomahawk down on the settlements. The singing here is hymns." Nancy's voice was strong and bitter. She could, James Abel told himself again, take care of herself. John, his brother, said hurriedly:

"You don't understand each other, and it's natural you wouldn't. You are both right because you're both what you are. You are what made you, Nancy and Laure. New Orleans is just as different from Harrodstown. What I say is there's enough room in the world for each. You and the towns. I do admit, James, I agree with Laure. This is melancholy; I miss New Orleans myself. But Kentucky is getting better. I can recollect 1776 here, with Nancy making soap. You hated it, too, Nancy; I don't blame you. With the lime and heavy ashes and fat." Nancy Sash paid not the slightest notice to him. She was still intent upon Laure. Laure Abel held her chin high. James wished that his brother had never brought her there. Flora, he could see, was all admiration for her. McKee had a sullen

expression to him. Nancy's son, James, wouldn't scarcely put a hand to his supper. He never, at best, was one for talking. Laure Abel said to the boy, "You must come to New Orleans; see for yourself. You would be splendid in fine ruffles. When trees are young, in the spring, they put on flowers. It is natural. The birds sing. Everything is happy then." James Sash gave her a swift and deep look of gratitude. It was not decent, the old man told himself: you might have taken from Laure's manner that James, no better than eleven or there, were a grown dandy and fitten for light cities and women.

"James is bad enough where he is," James's mother replied for him; "he can't seem to keep a scrap of fat on his bones now; and I'll thank no one to put heathen ideas in his head." She didn't know what it was, Nancy proceeded, but something had took him. He was restless in the night, with a gabbling voice would raise your hair like a scalping knife, and mortal cold at all times. "It's funny," Beriah Mace admitted, "I was at New Orleans but I didn't take a shine to it. The speaking for one—I like to know what I'm listening to. I don't put no dependence on foreign tongues. I missed the Kentucky woods, too, with the sunlight shining pale in them, and the flowers by the river. Even with the Indians I take to it. It's in our blood, in James Abel's and Nancy and the rest, more or less. We growed from it like a tree. A limestone tree. You wouldn't find that if you hunted the woods for a life, but it's what I mean."

"You can take to one and still understand about the other," McKee objected. "I've never been out of the settlements, but I'd like right fair to travel and see the

things Aunt Laure talks about. This is just backwoods. The western waters." He said all of that, James Abel thought, on the account of Laure. She had moved him considerable; she had moved Flora—who was kind of like her anyways—and she had even taken the fancy of young James. That would not bring Nancy any closer to her than she were. Laure spoke a foreign piece to her husband, he left the room, and when he returned he brought her a long thin and dark cigar. Laure Abel smoked reflectively. For once she was silent. Her hand with the cigar was thin and yet it wasn't thin. It were soft and the fingers curved softly. In spite of himself James privately admitted that it reminded him of a tulip poplar flower. Just the same he wished she was back in New Orleans. Yes, and John with her. He didn't welcome the way Nancy was; he knew, with her, what was sign, exactly the way you knew about Indian sign.

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THE night, following the earlier promise of evening, was dark; it was oppressive, with a low distant thunder; but no rain fell. Beriah Mace and Kate soon went home; James Abel and his brother moved hickory chairs to the cleared space before the main cabin entrance. It was time they talked, John asserted. "I put it off because we didn't appear to have a good chance, and what I want to say needs that. All I ask, James, is for you to listen till I'm through. You won't understand it, or tell what I mean, unless you hear it all. You wouldn't think, at first, it was about us and the store; you'll believe it's only politics;

but you'd be wrong. This new Federal Government, for example: James, it won't be no time until there is a monarchy in America. The old Confederation was bad but this will be worse. Remember what I say, we'll end with a monarch. It stands to reason. The east and north are headed that way right now, leaving Kentucky for the Indians. The first thing you know we will have an excise, heavier than ever it was under England, and troops to collect it.

"Look how the states voted when John Jay, a little piece back, wanted us to give up navigating the Mississippi river for twenty years so he could get the kind of treaty suited to New York. Seven were against us. He only needed two more votes and what would have happened to Kentucky then? Where could we trade? Nowhere is where. They don't want our crops, they don't need tobacco in Virginia. We can't pole clear up to Fort Pitt, and then, after that, send wagons over the mountains to Philadelphia. It's bad enough bringing things down the rivers now. You know that. It won't be long before another Federal move like the Jay treaty will succeed and then we'll be in the woods and stay there. There isn't a state east of the mountains will have a mind to us. East of the mountains, James, remember that, it is important." James Abel said, "Well, what about it?"

"This," John replied, "we've got to look out for ourselves, turn where it's our interest to turn. I didn't see any of it when I first came to the settlements. I didn't even understand when I reached New Orleans. But I do now. Colonel Wilkinson showed me. James, he is the greatest man in the west." James Abel objected to that. "George

Rogers Clark is the greatest," he asserted. "For a soldier, yes," John agreed; "but he belongs to our own time. When the Indian wars are over so will he be. James Wilkinson belongs to the future. He'll make Kentucky. Why, hell, look what he has done already—gone to New Orleans by himself, along with a cargo of tobacco and flour, and he wasn't there a day before Governor Miro let him rest his goods in the King's stores. He saw the Intendant, Navarro; Conway, the Governor's brother-in-law and royal Contador; and persuaded them to let him trade. That is what Colonel Wilkinson did. You know well as I do he bought tobacco in the settlements for two dollars a hundredweight; well, he got nine for it in New Orleans. James Wilkinson brought back thirty-five thousand dollars in silver."

"That was big trading," James Abel agreed; "the biggest I ever hear of. But," he repeated his daughter Nancy's phrase, "what does it matter?" John exclaimed heatedly, "It means that Colonel Wilkinson has opened the Louisiana market to us. He has saved Kentucky. We can carry our tobacco and flour, as much as we can make, to New Orleans and get a good price for it. James, Colonel Wilkinson has a treaty with Governor Miro in his pocket. With him. Any of us can go to New Orleans and sell for silver, for specie, or for bills on Havana or Philadelphia, and then fill our store with every kind of goods." James put in, "We'll all be glad of that. But what is special about it? I can't for the life of me see. The government at Philadelphia ain't agoing to stop us if the Spaniards won't. There's a trick to it somewheres." John did not know what he meant by a trick. "You're so

cloudy in the head, like tonight is, that it's hard talking to you. If the Philadelphia government won't help us, and Spain will, what does that signify? It signifies our interest rests with Spain. We're a damn sight closer to New Orleans than we are to Boston or even New York. New Orleans understands about us better. We will never get anything from the north; very well, then, we must look to the south."

"There she is!" James Abel exclaimed triumphantly. "You want us to be Spaniards. Wilkinson wants to sell us to Louisiana. I knowed there was a trick to it. Well, I won't be no foreigner, and that's certain. There is one in the house now; and, with respects to you, John, we don't want more. That is, me and Nancy don't. The rest of you is raddled about her. But I tell you this, public and private, Nancy and me we still manage things here. We do for a fact." John said coldly, "You couldn't, neither of you, be like Laure if you killed yourselves to do it. She is very beautiful, with noble blood, and educated by the Ursuline nuns; and whatever Nancy may be it's not that. Harrodstown is hardly New Orleans, either. It's just what I've said—you haven't seen anything and so you can't know. I'll proceed on to where I was getting, if you don't stop me again. I had several close talks with James Wilkinson, and I will ask you not to repeat what I tell you about them. He has no immediate plans; they will come out when the time is right; and then you'll be surprised at the men back of him. George Muter and Judge Sebastian and Mr. Brown showed in their public letter last year how they viewed conditions.

"James Wilkinson thinks we can't turn away from our

best interests; the day will come, he says, and not far off, when we will have to leave the United States; Kentucky must stand by herself: and she can only do that with Spanish help. That's in the future. At present, James, I have an offer from Colonel Wilkinson for us to be part of his trading concern; our store in Harrodstown will share in his interests. At least you know what they are. Boundless. We'll have the protection of his boats when we send furs and tobacco down to New Orleans. He'll see we get paid prompt and full. James, it won't be any time before we're rich. We'll have a traffic that will cover the western waters. All we need to do is come out with the right support, be intelligent, when it's time."

"To hell with when it's time!" James cried. "It's always time. It's time now. And now I'll tell you no. I ain't seed much, but I kin look farther through the woods than you. I kin see more in a minute in Kentucky than you'll ever take notice to. You told about Laure being learned by the nuns and beautiful, and how Nancy was different, and you were right. I listened to them both at the table, and if you had you wouldn't have said none of this. Not a black word of it. Nancy Sash is Kentucky and Laure is the Spanish. A foreign woman. Nancy was right, it's been hard here and we're a serious peoples. We got a solemn and revengeful God. We'll niver for all time be light-minded. When you talk about Kentucky being jined to Spain—and that's where you were leading—I could laugh in your face. We're north, John Abel, and never south. Protestants that belong to the United States. If the Constitution don't take notice to us we'll take notice to hit. I ain't highflown, either. I know which side of the skin

the fur is on. The store will stay like it is. We've moved along pretty good without Colonel James Wilkinson. If you've a mind to it Beriah Mace and me will buy you out. There's plenty in the family besides you to fetch it on."

John Abel, a vague figure in the darkness, rose. "I could see after I started to talk it would end like it has," he said. "I ought to have stopped. Beriah Mace is big a fool as you are." Just as big, James agreed. "I wouldn't be surprised if he was bigger if you ast him would he change to a Spaniard."

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THE next day, at the store, James Abel gave Beriah Mace a general description of his talk with his brother John about Colonel Wilkinson. It was early of the morning, no one but Beriah and himself were present, and James grew excited. "I said to John," he asserted, "that with your head full of foreign notions you're no good to us. I told him we'll buy you out, Beriah and me. So we will. As soon as he began I knowed there was a trick to it." Beriah Mace was more judicious. "A lot of pretty good people agree with him," Beriah admitted. "I don't happen to. Around here most don't. It might be different in Danville with all the lawyers and the learned. It is a question, James, but I don't doubt the outcome." Beriah was too reasonable to suit James Abel; James didn't even want to hear tell of any of it. "Can't I see it plain in my own house," he demanded; "with a foreign woman drawed right up to my table. I can divide my family in two, the way you divide the people of

Kentucky. There's them holds with Laure and them that don't. You seen last night how me and Nancy was, and you must have took note to McKee. McKee he was more like a calf than a man. Why, even little James didn't know his mother was there for staring his eyes out at Laure. Kate is a sensible girl at bottom, and God He knows I wisht Flora was—I seen her smoking one of Laure's cigars yestiddy. I said to Flora, I said, why don't you smoke like a decent girl, and take a clay pipe or a cob, with a couple of pinches of honest twist.

"Laure Abel gave me a turn this morning was like to be my death. Beriah, I was skeered. I was going out the back door some early, the day were just gray, when a person moved close to the wall. I jumped sideways like a deer, and it were Laure. She was wrapped tight up in black, with that black shawl over her face, and pressed close against the cabin. I started to make nothing of it, Beriah, when her hand fell, and there was steel in it. Laure hid a knife in her skirt. What do you make out of that?"

"Nothing," Beriah replied; "no reason why she wouldn't be out back if you were. I don't set no store on the knife part." A customer came in, and the business of barter, of weighing sheep's wool, went forward. James was annoyed at Beriah Mace; he hadn't paid no notice to his story about Laure. Middling queer, James considered it to be. He had seen the knife, the quick flash of steel, plain as plain. Perhaps Laure thought it was Nancy and was fixed to put a knife in her. He gave that idea up; it was evidently nonsense. James went home to dinner—Kate Mace carried Beriah's dinner to the store—and

found that Nancy's concern for her son had changed to anger. As he entered the cabin the boy, his lips set, went out with a suppressed violence by the back door. This, too, upset James Abel. "You're over sharp with him," he informed his daughter. "I'll bet if you told me what he done it wouldn't be nothing."

Nancy regarded him with a smouldering gaze. "I asked him to stay by the cabin where he could be a help, there is always more than I can manage, and this is not New Orleans with niggers to do for you. Then, when I came to look for him, when I needed him, James was gone. He had left with Laure Abel to find cardinal flowers. Laure heard what I said and she took him just the same." Like as not, he replied pacifically, Laure hadn't understood her. Laure's knowledge of English wasn't big by no means. "She knew," Nancy asserted. "It isn't that," she added, "not that one thing. James follows her around like a little hound dog. If he ain't with Laure Abel he's in a misery. I'm nothing to him now. I'll murder that God damn foreign woman," Nancy's voice rose and James put a hand on her shoulder. "Be quiet," he commanded her; "they can hear you outside the room. You won't kill nobody. I had a talk with brother John last night, and with Beriah today, and we're going to buy John out of the store. We can't agree with him. In a little he'll be clear gone and Laure as well." Nancy said bitterly. "And James Sash, too, likely. She only does it for a spite on me," Nancy's voice rose again; "she never has a hand to her own child; a black slave minds him; Laure told me she didn't take noways to any young. She don't count nothing on being a mother."

James Abel suddenly saw deeply into Nancy's being—all the feeling she had put in Gabriel Sash—exactly as if he had been that little old chest of hers—she now laid to young James. She was just as unreasonable with him as she was about her husband; he was Gabriel's child, he was Gabriel, and he was hers; he was their bond and evidence; everyways you looked at it he was the world and all to Nancy Sash. That, to his mind, was ridiculous—it didn't do to take anything, husband or child or life or death, so serious. One by one they changed and passed away. Only death was certain. Sarah had gone and his old friends, the men who settled the Kentucky country. But they had, in the past, called it Kentake, the big meadows and hunting ground. Some, not many, had died peaceful; others the Indians had ketched, tomahawked and scalped, or burned ascreeching in fat pine fires; some, the first he had known, died in the war against the British, at Monmouth and King's Mountain. No, you couldn't take things black and hard like Nancy did. He tried to help her, a resentful withdrawn woman, and failed; James Abel had no words to express, to fit, his philosophy and experience.

He was, because of this, troubled; all afternoon at his store his mind was filled with dark thoughts and premonitions of disaster. He shook his head doubtfully; his lips moved soundlessly. James Abel wanted to tell John to leave his house at once; but he couldn't; it wasn't in him. That would have outraged every instinct of his Kentucky bred spirit. If he owned a house it was John's house; he wouldn't turn nobody out let alone his full brother. Laure, he recognized, even made an effort to

ketch him. He was at the supper table, reflectively drinking tea; the others rose, moved away; but she remained.

"In New Orleans," Laure said, "we sit a long time at the table; but we drink coffee, not tea; with brandy. Coffee and brandy are perfection together. Like love and youth." Tea, he replied abruptly, was good enough for him; and so was Kentucky whisky. He did not like foreign drinks. "You hate everything that is strange to you," she observed; "I did hope you wouldn't hate me. You are a strong man, and the head of a house, of a family. We were taught by the Ursulines to look up to that. I have been instructed to venerate your dignity." She made James more and more uneasy.

"You know life," Laure continued; "I watch you and you are not disturbed the way the others, your children and connections, are; no, you remain calm. I venerate calmness. And you have courage, you belong to brave times; even I can see that; it is not quite the same here now." He hurriedly disallowed most of that. "I haven't done nothing," James Abel told her; "you can't hardly say I've even fit the Indians. Only a time or two. When Blackfish, with forty-seven warriers, helt us in the fort here last year I misdoubt if I killed more than nine. Floyd or General George Rogers Clark or Estill they were different; so was Gabriel Sash; Gabriel he was one of the Long Hunters with Colonel Knox." Where Laure Abel was concerned he felt a shade more pleasantly inclined. It was natural Nancy could not get along with her—he never seen two grown women not kin who got along—and it didn't suit him to have either her or John too close,

but he could see that some would find Laure a considerable female.

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It was all, as he had realized before, very confusing; however, one part, with his brother's help, had been made clear: James Abel knew now what he felt about Kentucky, about Colonel Wilkinson and his own store. For good or bad he was part of the United States. His memories and family reached back into Virginia and bound him to the past of his traditions and blood. He didn't know much about the rights of it; John understood it all better; John, too, was learned like the lawyers and them who belonged to the Political Club at Danville; but he could see where he, yes, and Kentucky, belonged. It was Sunday, an afternoon still except for the notes of the wild doves and yellow with sunlight; Nancy had gone with James to his Uncle Beriah's; John Abel was somewheres with Colonel Harrod likely arging; James, who had walked to the edge of the settlement with Thomas Denton to see their plantings of Indian corn, was returning home. He stopped in front of his double cabin with a feeling of pride: it had a solid stone chimney, in place of the old cats-and-clay, and it was cleared out splendid on the front; there were red and blue and yellow flowers agin the door; most of the stumps left by the trees he had laboriously girdled twelve year before were gone. He went on into the main room of his dwelling, but what he saw there held him motionless, cold, in the doorway.

McKee Abel, in the middle of the floor, had his arms around Laure and was akissing her. Nor that wasn't all — Flora sat looking at them with her chin propped up on a hand. Laure saw him first and twisted out of McKee's arms. She smiled her faint red smile at him. McKee turned slowly and silently regarded his father. Flora laughed right out. James, for the life of him, didn't know what to say; he was part ashamed and part mad; and at the back of those feelings was a third, more disturbing than either. "Gracious," he exclaimed weakly; "gracious!" Strangely enough he was more upset by Flora's inactive part in what he had just witnessed than in the activities of McKee and Laure. Laure Abel, without a visible stir or sound, vanished.

"I never," James Abel began, "in all the years I been alive, near to fifty, seen a thing like this. In my own house. With my own son and daughter and brother John's wife." Anger rose above his other emotions. "Take shame," he cried at McKee; "loose and without a principle the way you are. Hugging your aunt and your sister looking at you. If I didn't know it for a fact I'd never tell you were a son of mine. I can't put a name to you, McKee Abel. Unless you've went crazy. She's your uncle's wife." He became speechless literally through the inability to find a phrase that fitted his son's act. He had never been so shocked before.

As James Abel stood gazing at McKee he saw his son's face grow ugly; a look invaded it he had viewed before on the faces of men and recognized. McKee's expression was murderous. This is bad, he told himself. His son's hands were clenched, he stood leaning slightly forward,

his eyes fixed upon his father. "Don't put a name to it," McKee told him harshly; "if you do you'll call her the same and I'll kill you out of life. It don't matter who you are. Not now. Not if it's about Laure." James Abel could not think what to say or do. He was only certain of one thing—he must not let McKee crowd him out of his right; he must not be allowed to threaten him, James Abel. At the same time McKee, who looked to James to be insane, meant what he said. He was, for the moment, capable of any violence.

James temporized with the situation threatening them all by turning to Flora. "Go up to the garret and set there and think on yourself," he commanded her. "A girl without shame. I take it worse on you than from your brother. You wouldn't need hardly no decency at all to carried you out of the room." Flora laughed again. She didn't move. Instead, she informed him that she was not a child any more. "I'm not a child and you might as well know it. Why did you come in where you weren't wanted for? Why didn't you stay out in the woods where you belong with the painted Indians and the animals." James said, confusedly, "This is my house. You are my daughter and McKee is my son. I come in here when I like and without the asking. If I do belong in the woods it's been a good thing for you. You took your ease and safety and comfort out of it." His anger had immensely increased, it was a solid reality inside him, as though it were frozen into an icy block.

"I remember you're a woman," he said to her, "even if I forget you be my daughter. What you are in this house I will decide later." James Abel moved over to the

cupboard by the fireplace, where he kept the old implements and objects of his earlier days of hunting. McKee, he saw, had turned on his heel and was watching him intently. He opened the cupboard door. There his powder horn, decorated with scrimshaw work, rested; there was his bullet pouch and belt of tough buffalo hide with ties of buckskin wang; his scalping knife and tomahawk lay side by side. He regarded the objects of the different, the more dangerous, past with a short veiled gaze. Then he faced McKee Abel.

"I know what is in your head," he informed him, "you don't have to tell me with it staring out of your eyes. Mind this about Laure Abel, and don't go to move till I'm through. She's bad from front to back and from head to foot. All bad. Your sister Flora is bad too. I don't know are you or not for a spell yet. You just said you'd kill me out of life if I spoke against Laure; I've spoke against her plenty and you heered it; and now, when I say this to you, we'll diskiver the rest. You can move out of that door, quick as you favor to, or you can go ahead in here. If you lift a hand on me I'll put my knife through you. I'll drive it in you so you'll stay cool for ever more."

McKee Abel breathed heavily and audibly. His hands opened and shut. He moved forward by a step and then he stopped. The coldness of James Abel's gaze never shifted. Flora cried, "McKee, don't let him send you off. He won't take a knife to you. Show him he can't order us out of our wits." James was silent. Suddenly he felt infinitely strong, young. He had no more feeling about his son than he would for a Cherokee or a bear. As he watched McKee he saw the younger man's arms fall

limply against his body. McKee turned and walked unevenly to the door. He disappeared.

"Go up to the garret," James repeated to his daughter; "stay there till I tell you come down." Flora rose and went to the ladder-like stairs that led up to where she slept. Her feet, in store shoes, finally vanished through the square opening to the space above. He sat, now weak as, before, he was strong, in the chair she had vacated. James Abel forgot McKee, he forgot Flora, his youngest child. Laure occupied his mind. Her influence seemed to fill the room. He could smell the sweet smell she always had to her. It made him faintly sick. A feeling touched him like the shadow cast by the presence of death. Laure, she was death. He didn't know what he meant by that but it was so. An evil kind of death like burning at a stake, or the French Indians taking the skin off you little piece by little piece. It were worse than that—he was not afraid to die but he was afraid of the sensation Laure left in the room. God, she had near ketched him. Nancy Sash came, in her usual manner, aggressively into the doorway. "What is the matter?" she demanded. "From the way you look you might have took a spell." He replied solemnly, "Hell has been in here is what's the matter."

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James Abel, however, would tell Nancy no more than the fact that McKee had gone. "Did he leave of his own will?" she asked. "I wisht first I could have seen him. Men are always out of patience and won't learn that a

little time kin easy fix most. Doctor Mackenny would have knowed better," Nancy added. "McKee did have some choice," James said grimly. "It'll need more than a little time to fix him." Nancy studied her father. "That Laure was in it," she announced. He bent all his attention on the twist tobacco he was rolling between his hard palms. John Abel came in, the family gathered at the end of day, and James was saved from further questioning. Laure Abel was quiet at supper; James had called for Flora to come down and she appeared with a red swollen face to her; he explained briefly that McKee would not be there. Later, with Beriah Mace, he went forward with their arrangements to assume John's interest in the store. His brother laid a sharp tongue on the whole transaction. "You are throwing away your interest and your family's future," he asserted. "You won't be sensible until it's too late and no profit can be made. James Wilkinson pretty near controls the fur situation right now. Today. With his position in New Orleans he'll soon own the trade and commerce of Kentucky." Neither James nor Beriah answered him.

Beriah's jaw worked solidly chewing a considerable piece of tobacco. He wiped the back of his hand across his mouth and left a yellow smear on it. James smoked reflectively. He could hear the women in the cabin moving about, setting back the chairs, putting away the supper dishes. All the women, he added to himself, but Laure; he knew without looking that she was comfortable somewheres with her cigar. He said to John, "We'll give you five hundred dollars, specie, for your heft in the store. That's a lot of money." Beriah added,

"A hell of a lot!" John Abel wanted more; he mentioned seven hundred and fifty dollars; and the argument continued. Presently Nancy came out and sat in the doorway beside them. The sky was full of stars; there wasn't a sound in the settlement or from the woods.

In the morning, when James Abel was leaving the cabin, Nancy stopped him. "Come out back," she said. She led him to the wall there by the door. "What do you make from that?" she demanded, pointing to some dark stains on a log. He examined them curiously. "It's just mud," he decided. Nancy rubbed the wall vigorously with her palm. "Now look," she commanded him. He could see a crude figure cut in the wood. It was a curious sort of mud, he thought. "That is blood," his daughter told him; "and more too it wasn't there last night. I took notice. Do you see what's wrote on it." He could make out two crooked letters, a J and an S. "James Sash," Nancy whispered thinly. "She made it and put her blood to it. Today he was worse than I yet seen him. He couldn't hardly raise up out of bed." James Abel had a vision of Laure by the wall, wrapped close in black against the gray morning, with a quick flicker of steel in her hand. He said nothing at all about that. James, it was certain, had cut her there himself he told her instead. "He wouldn't never make his letters that foreign way," she contradicted him. That was clearly true. "Her," Nancy Abel said. "She's laid a spell on Gabriel's son." Nancy Abel stood silent and motionless, lost in thought. Then she went abruptly into the house.

James was troubled, he was bothered all the way to the store, and at the store the oppression hanging around him

grew heavier. He wondered about the figure on the wall, with its letters, and the dark stains to it. Like as not they were blood, he admitted to himself. He did not, though, actually believe that it had a thing to do with any sickness. Not actually, he repeated. He didn't set no store on sign like that. Indian sign were different, it meant something, but this was just nonsense. It couldn't have no meaning to it. He went home early, before noon; Kate was not able to get to the store with Beriah's dinner, and he took Beriah with him. They met John Abel at the cabin, they were talking in the cleared space with flowers, watching the slave woman with John's son, when James plainly heard a choking cry from the room his brother's family occupied. John heard it too. "That was Laure," he asserted, starting forward. James silently agreed with him; a deeper oppression, an acute sense of dread, overcame him; and he held John with a hand on his shoulder. "You come along," he said to Beriah Mace.

It was, James saw at once, in the room, as bad as all along he had feared. Nancy was standing over a bed that held a collapsed figure. His daughter faced the three men. "I killed her," Nancy Abel told them. "She put a spite on little James that was wasting him away and I killed her. There is no sorrow to it. I am glad I did. He was Gabriel's son. You got a right to protect your own heart." John Abel thrust her aside and bent over the bed. "Laure!" he cried, "Laure, for God's sake answer me." He felt his wife's brow; John laid a hand on her heart. Then he rose. "It's so," he said. "Laure is dead. Nancy did it, she choked her. My wife Laure I brought to Kentucky. She didn't want to come and I made her.

You will pay full for this," he told Nancy. "There is a court now at Harrodsburg, it's not like it used to be when you could murder anybody, and you'll go before it. You will hang on your own confession. I give you my sacred word to that."

Beriah Mace laid a covering over the dead body. It was clear he was waiting for James to speak. At last James Abel answered his brother. "No, John," he said in a gentle voice, "Nancy won't never go before the Harrodsburg court, and I will tell you the why. She's too faithful a woman. She's labored too much through all her life for that. Nancy has lived in sorrow and I won't let her end the way you told. Like Nancy said you got to protect your own heart. That is what she done, put it how you mought, she protected her own heart. John, I don't make out to explain this, it's beyond me and you too, it laid with Laure and Nancy. Laure and Nancy ended it between them. We won't do nothing more."

"I'll have her hanging in a month," John cried.

"Don't be worried," Nancy told her father. "I'll hang and willing. For what I brought about. Life has never been what I'd set much on."

"No, John," James repeated. "You will take your child and black slave and go back to New Orleans. That is best. We'll give you the money you asked for. Today. The law will never be put on Nancy." John Abel demanded, "How will you stop it, with Laure dead on her bed and Nancy Abel confessed." Beriah Mace stepped forward. He was quiet too. "Nothing will happen but what James says," he proceeded. "James Abel and me will tend to her," he indicated Laure's body, "and you

be keerful to agree with us. Right keerful. We're a big family of men and a faithful family. We won't never take our bothers to the court. Go in the other part of the cabin and rest a spell." He turned to Nancy. "You are an Abel," Beriah said: "you will have to help me in here. James, you keep anybody out for a little."

James Abel and John left the room. John stopped outside. "Damn you," he cursed at his brother, "and damn your bloody state. I'll take my child out of it before you murder him." James said, "Be still. Beriah warned you to take keer how you speak." His mind returned to Nancy and to Gabriel Sash's son. She had done right to save him like she done if she thought that danger, the spite of Laure, was on him. Nothing, he realized, could have stopped her from killing the foreign woman. Nancy's spirit was the strongest he had ever knowed. It was at once her cross and her crown.

III

When, at Maysville, Mayor Trigg mustered out the Kentucky volunteers in the war with England Brevet-Colonel James Sash was very well satisfied. He was, he told himself, particularly sick of the plumes and bright buttons of the militia; at last, he hoped, he was finished with fighting and with wars. It was just past noon, almost at the end of November, of a cold gray day; the sky was low, solid with cloud; the Ohio river flowed solid and dull past the Maysville landings. This was 1813. It had been more than a year since, in August, he had been elected Captain of a company from Franklin county in the First Rifle regiment, Kentucky militia. The troops had assembled as usual at Georgetown, three brigades of mounted volunteers together with regulars under Colonel Wells; and there, standing in formation, James

Sash had heard the oration of Mr. Clay and the oration of Doctor Blythe from Transylvania University. After that they marched against Detroit and the British; but, marching, it was learned that Hull had surrendered. This, naturally, disorganized the volunteers—a body James Sash had small confidence in—and they largely deserted. General Harrison was put in command of the Kentucky troops; and early January James found himself at the Rapids of the Maumee with a large American force.

The battle of the Raisin followed: he was seated on his horse moving at a slow pace through the peaceful town of Maysville, a mounted orderly following him; away from the stir of the river front there was no sound except the impacts of the horses' hoofs; yet, so far removed from the River Raisin and safe, long accustomed to the most violent fatalities, a sense of horror overcame him at the thought of that battle. It had proved easy enough to take Frenchtown from the English; but it was far different attempting to hold it without even the common precaution of posting sentinels on the main way of the enemy's approach. Why Wells had stationed his men outside the line of defense James Sash could not yet conjecture. That, of course, was what ruined them. When, in no time at all, Colonel Wells was smashed they had had to leave their defenses and go to his aid. A hundred of them, with Lewis and Colonel Allen, sallied out, and a hundred, practically, were slain. He had been lucky, both then and afterward. Allen was killed at the head of his men and Lewis badly wounded. That, however, was nothing compared with what followed upon their sur-

render; after the English dishonored their promise of a safe conduct for the American force.

Even now, leaving Maysville, in imagination James Sash heard the yells of the Indians burning a house filled with helpless Kentucky soldiers, the cries of the wounded in the cellar of a tavern where the Indians were hacking and scalping with tomahawks and knives. The streets of Frenchtown, the fringe of the forest, were dreadful with the bodies of murdered Americans, officers and privates. He had escaped on foot by bribing an Indian—with his saddle bags and all they contained—to guide him back to General Harrison's impotent command. This arrangement ended abruptly when, after only a short distance, the guide tried cunningly to murder him. James Sash, in a cold ferocity, put a knife in him. Yes, he'd had enough of war and dark memories. Maysville, he recognized, at last was growing; log houses were giving place to brick; the number of stores and taverns had multiplied since he had been there before. He left the town by the old road —Smith's wagon road it had been—for Lexington. It was wonderfully improved since his first experience of it.

The defeat on the River Raisin had neither begun his military service nor finished it. He had remained in the north until the end of that campaign: Green Clay, with three thousand men, reached Fort Meigs the May of 1813. After Dudley's idiotic mistake and disaster four thousand more Kentuckians, under Governor Shelby, joined Harrison; and in October, at the River Thames, the British were beaten. The Indians, with Tecumseh killed, vanished into the forest shades. Before all that, in 1792, he had been with Major Adair when, near Fort St. Clair,

they were attacked and totally defeated by a force of Indians led by Little Turtle. With General Scott the year following he had joined Wayne north of Cincinnati; the militia returned home for the winter, but he remained at Greensville, helping to build Fort Recovery; and in August—this was 1794—James took part in the successful battle of Fallen Timbers. Now, he told himself definitely, his military obligations had been fully met. They were over. James Sash had reached, he saw, the town of Washington. It was laid out scarcely more than twenty-five years ago, in the midst of a dense canebrake; a single street had been cut through the cane and narrow ways led back to the few cabins there; but now the cane had been cleared away, and, like Maysville, there were brick houses and stores. Washington, James Sash calculated, must have reached near to a thousand people. Beyond the country grew richer, the canebrakes disappeared and open wood meadows surrounded him; great trees, nobly spaced, spread wide symmetrical limbs; the farms were orderly with white fences. A deep pleasure enveloped him—he had returned to the land, the limestone soil, of his birth.

The day, when he reached the Lower Blue Licks, gave promise of darkening early; his horse showed a trace of lameness in an off forefoot; Leviticus, his orderly, lagged over the road; but James Sash had determined to reach Paris—to get that far away from the late contentious past—before he stopped for the night. He had come, already, almost half way. However, James delayed to take his dinner there—a stew of venison with vegetables, cold Kentucky ham, wild turkey and hot apple brandy. The

night was accomplished when he rode slowly into Paris. The tavern was full and, rather than sleep in a room then occupied by three teamsters well on the way to drunkenness, he chose a straw bed on the floor of the attic. It was far more comfortable than many of the beds, the camps, he had known in the north; and soon overcome he carried the vague melancholy settled upon him into his dreams. There was an early breakfast of beefsteaks, sausage and broiled fowl and fish, johnny-cake, preserves, and tea with a large dram of whisky in it; and, leaving Paris at a sharp trot, when he forded the Cane Run and entered Lexington the day was still ascendant.

James Sash resolutely turned his mind from the dark thoughts of yesterday and addressed himself to the future. But that, as well, carried him back into the past: early days in his grandfather's cabin at Harrodstown—but it was called Harrodsburg now—and the log school where he studied Morse's Geography out loud, learned Watt's Hymns for Children, and later read Cicero's Select Orations and the Testament in Greek. They were, however, soon over; he went on to his study of the law under Colonel Nicholas—living with the pleasant Nicholas family—in Mercer county. James had been admitted to practice in the District Court at Danville in 1794, when he was eighteen, keeping a close association with his legal instructor until the older man moved away to Slate Furnace. Colonel Nicholas moved again, to Lexington; he died in 1799, a professor at Transylvania University; and soon after that James had gone to Frankfort. To be exact, he changed his place of residence in 1802, when the Old District Courts were abolished and Circuit

Courts established in their place. He had been, James Sash realized, immediately successful at the state capital, riding the circuit and arguing in the Federal Court and before the Court of Appeals.

In addition he had served twice in the state legislature —in the lower house from Mercer county in 1798, and, 1807, from Franklin county, in the upper house. He was, he informed himself, done with politics as well as with war. He wasn't, it happened, suitable to either. He owned an instinctive and unconquerable hatred for all obscurity and violence. No one, he silently continued, could be less well adapted to the pursuits that had lately occupied his years. James supposed it was on account of his imagination. Things were vivid, terrifying, to him before they had actually happened. It was just as bad if, after all, they never occurred. A small army of fears occupied the back of his mind. He did not allow them to appear; they were, he hoped, powerless to affect his determination or conduct; but just the same there they were. Politics had been a continual difficulty for him—he had no taste for the combination of purely selfish and venal minds that, in the long run, were more powerful than the finest projects and men. He liked far better than the small complications of the present the few wide issues that had engaged Kentucky in his earlier years—the struggle against the influences of Spain, the difficulty of transforming Kentucky into a state, the assault of a French republicanism against the traditional American spirit. The tradition of Alexander Hamilton and of President Washington. James Sash was a bitter Federalist. He had absorbed that attitude, he liked to think, from his grand-

father, James Abel. It was the only legacy from the past he regarded with approbation.

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He rode over the long preliminary reach of East Main Street into Frankfort past the middle of afternoon, and he was conscious once more of the pleasure he had in its orderly fineness. Lexington, it was asserted, was bigger; Lexington was growing more rapidly than any other town in Kentucky; that might be so, but it could never have the importance, the calm authority, of Frankfort, the state capital. There was nothing in the larger place to compare with the sightliness of Wapping Street with its dignified brick houses set in wide lawns and flower gardens reaching in terraces down to the river; no dwellings like Liberty Hall, where Mr. Brown lived, or John Crittenden's mansion. Lexington, as a matter of fact, owned no men comparable with the Crittendens and Justice Todd and Judge Bibb. When James Sash had first come to Frankfort there was no court house; the courts sat in the second story of the State House; but now there was a commodious brick building in Capitol Square, with locust trees planted in the yard. The Square had been set off by a substantial post and rail fence. In addition to all that Frankfort had a water system—wooden pipes were laid from the spring at Cedar Grove to some very convenient places about the town.

James Sash passed the foot of Broadway and High Street and, at the corner of Ann Street, arrived at Daniel Weiseger's tavern, where he kept a room. Before he

could dismount Mrs. Weiseger, in even more than her customary hospitable excitement, appeared; he was immediately the center of a considerable and clamorous gathering.

There had been rumors of an American victory on the Thames, but nothing certain was known; and it was not only necessary for him to establish that fact—he was required to relate his experience at the disaster on the River Raisin. He replied as briefly as possible; James acknowledged with a sufficient courtesy the congratulations upon his services and escape; and then, releasing Leviticus from further attendance on him, he withdrew to his room. There he removed his jacket with its marks of rank and hard service, stripped off his boots and worn leather breeches, and pulled vigorously at a bell-rope, ordering a bath of hot water. A negro brought a round tin tub, the hot water followed in a number of buckets, and very soon, for the first time in a year and—a year and three months precisely—he was luxuriously clean.

James Sash found some appropriate clothes left from his civilian existence and dressed deliberately, and then the past forced itself again upon his attention. It was unavoidable—he must go to Bardstown and see his daughter Nancy. That realization brought back a great deal else: Nancy was his only child. How long had Cora, his wife, been dead? He answered instantly—she had died of lung fever in 1801. Twelve years ago. Nancy now was thirteen, no fourteen. He was troubled by that. She had been, living with his uncle, Bruton Abel, too long away from him. Mary Abel, although she was a Roman Catholic—that was, totally different from all James had been

bred to and understood—took splendid care of Nancy; but now he wanted his daughter to be with him. Soon she would be grown up and, with someone else, leave him forever. He would not, in spite of a complete propriety due to the presence of Mrs. Weiseger, bring her to live with him at the tavern; he must have a house; and, while she would soon be grown, Nancy was still too young to manage so much. For the first time since Cora's death he saw that it would be an advantage for Nancy and himself if he married again.

Damn it, James Sash thought, I don't want to get married because it would be an advantage to us. His mind, however, remained fixed upon that possibility. He would have had little good of a wife in the ten years past; his necessary course must have amounted to no better than an act of desertion; but now, he realized, it was different. He was through with fighting; he had even given up the petty removements of politics; he was about to address himself soberly and permanently to the practice of the law in Frankfort. Marriage, he told himself, might not be a bad idea. Now he had gone so far he was confronted by a tremendous obstacle—there wasn't a woman in the world he knew of whom he wanted to marry. He could find one in Frankfort, James had no doubt; Kentucky was full of appropriate and desirable women; but it was impossible, too cold-blooded, for him to deliberately search for a wife.

His material prospects and affairs, triumphing over the last ten years of what he regarded as no better than a dangerous political experiment, were more than satisfactory. After all, while James Madison was Republican, he

was only the unfortunate lingering shadow of Jefferson. It was clear to everyone except fanatics who hated all government that the next President would be strongly Federal. Why, God damn it, Thomas Jefferson and the French nation had nigh to ruined the United States. Kentucky, with its enthusiasm for Republican clubs and Jacobin sentiments, had scarcely survived its folly. Well, that was safely over; he didn't want any trace of it to return. God, how he hated the past! He was falling back, he saw, into a mood for the moment happily lost, and he returned to the present, the immediate future.

He would leave at once for Bardstown; if he didn't, and no more than stopped to open his law rooms on Broadway, a hundred needs and responsibilities would conspire to hold him where he was. It was Saturday—he would continue his journeying Monday. Naturally he'd stop at Harrodsburg, at least stay overnight with Beriah Mace, who had married Kate Abel, his mother's younger sister. That was not an engaging prospect; family affairs would be discussed, the tragic memory brought up he constantly tried to repress. Beriah, once more, would explain why his store was not prospering; he would refer to the narrow views, the blind prejudices, of old James Abel; repeat how, along in 1788, when they'd had a chance to spread out, get rich, James Abel with his bigoted nature had brought it to nothing. He had heard it all before and, he recognized, he would have to listen to it more than once again. At the same time, he acknowledged, these were his own affairs. In his heart James Sash was strongly attached to his blood. It was a good blood. His grandmother had been a McKee, honorable

soldiers of the old Irish wars, bearing the cloudberry bush of the Lords of Lorne. An uncle of James Sash's had been named McKee, McKee Abel; he was killed in a useless expedition against the Wabash tribes.

He didn't remember his father, Gabriel Sash, since Gabriel had deserted his wife when James was less than a year old. He thought about him, however, with an interest devoid of all resentment—a man who loved the loneliness of the forest better than anything else in life. Gabriel Sash had come to Harrodstown out of the wilderness, one of the traditional Long Hunters who, with Colonel Knox, had gone early to Kentucky; he married Nancy Abel; but the forest had soon drawn him back again with its secrecy and solitude and supreme danger. When James Sash was a boy his father had seemed to him to be a shining hero. The names, the places, associated with the Long Hunters still remained in his mind—how, more than twenty of them, they left Reedy creek in 1769 and came by Cumberland Gap to Flat Lick. Beyond the South fork of the Cumberland river they camped in Price's Meadow and hunted in a land of high grass. Later, on the Rockcastle river, they met a party of friendly Cherokees. Joseph Drake discovered a pond that was a great place for deer. Isaac Bledsoe found a lick. He had, a little boy in Harrodstown, worn a hunting shirt that was a copy of the hunting shirts of Gabriel Sash. His mother had made them all. Here he was, once more straying into the dark memories of the past. It appeared to be unavoidable. Inevitable. His mind was like that. Dark. He was, James Sash decided, too much alone with his thoughts, a solitary man. There, anyhow, he

resembled his father. Except in his case the abstract balances and perfections of the law took the place of the forest. He returned to the thought of marriage, now in connection with himself and not Nancy. Then, abruptly, he deserted his speculations and went down to the ordinary of the tavern, where, relieved by a pressure of men and voices, he drank a great many complimentary whisky slings.

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Enveloped in a clear dusk, with Harrodsburg somber against a green sky, James Sash sat on his horse and gazed at the house beyond an informal footpath that divided its rough yard from the public road. The house, bearing the signs of obvious neglect, was part brick and part boards. Most of it was brick, a square unhandsome structure with gables in the steep roof; the smaller section, a story lower than the rest, lay at James's left. It was covered with limewashed boards, but it was obvious there were logs beneath. It was plain that it had once been a log cabin. He gazed steadily out of a dark absorbed countenance. He had been born there. The little wooden dwelling had been the cabin built for Gabriel and Nancy Sash when they were married thirty-eight years ago. James had no intimate memories of it; when Gabriel Sash left her his mother returned to her father's house; yet, coming up to it, he always stopped for a moment, touched by the influences of older years.

Beriah Mace, appearing in the doorway of his dwelling, interrupted James's reflections. Beriah, who was past fifty,

was a fat careless-appearing man with an expression at once good-natured and harassed. "Well, here you are!" he cried in a tone of warm welcome colored by deference. "It's time you were back from fighting the English and came to Harrodsburg. Not that anything here would draw you. Your family don't. So it seems, James, so it seems." He shook James Sash's hand. "This time I hope it's for a long stay." He could remain overnight, James told him at once. "I am obliged to go on to Bardstown and see Nancy." Inside he kissed his Aunt Kate; her daughter Reba, married to a Thomas Lafoe and living at home, kissed him. A Lafoe baby, Susan Ann, with, he found, an excessively damp and unengaging cheek, was held up for him to salute. Thomas was at the store, his wife explained. "He said he might not be in for supper, but I'll send him word. He always likes to hear you tell what's going on. I'll go call Isaac and Cassie too, but I misdoubt if it fetches them. Cassie can't never get away from all their children." Isaac was the Mace's eldest child; he had married a Pipskoe eight years ago; and already they had six children. They lived in James Abel's house, the first Abel dwelling in Kentucky.

"Reba," her mother proceeded, "see if there is water in James's room, and a clean hand towel. This isn't Frankfort with water brought right to you in pipes." Beriah repeated that phrase at supper. "This is not Frankfort," he said. The harassed air overcame his expression of cheerfulness. Thomas Lafoe, thin and pallid, impregnated, flavored, with the various odors and spices of his trading, echoed his father-in-law. "It ain't and that's a fact," Thomas declared. "There don't seem to be the

right go to Harrodsburg," Beriah continued. "I doubt if there's three hundred and fifty people and Bardstown with twice that many and better. The Catholics have more get up than the Kentuckians around in here," Beriah asserted. "Take the store for a pointer. Sales in fine goods has fell off wonderful. I stopped agetting them." The time had come, James saw, for Beriah's reference to the unfortunate effects of James Abel's past shortsightedness. "It might have been different," Beriah Mace added; "your grandfather had the choice. Expand or stay like you are and worse, his brother John said to him. Go with the times or stick in the woods. John Abel had just come from New Orleans when he told James that. Why, him and Colonel Wilkinson was close as two of your fingers on the one hand. Colonel Wilkinson! We could have shared the business of the whole country. Only James Abel wouldn't hear to it. I arged with him in the store the day after John spoke. I said, James, you owe it to your family and to Kentucky. You will end the biggest establishment in the state. But James Abel wouldn't hark to nobody. Not him. He set store on nothing that wasn't old as the hills. James was a great hand, too, opposing everything he called foreign. He never did take to the Spanish woman John Abel married in New Orleans. Her that died here in Harrodsburg." He fell silent for a little. "I never spoke out about that," Beriah Mace added, but more to himself than to the others at the supper table. "I never said a word." James scarcely heard him. He was absorbed by the dark memory of a woman closely folded in black with a high gold comb. The foreign woman John Abel had brought from Louisiana.

The fathomless dread that accompanied any thought of her settled profoundly over James Sash. It was a shapeless and intangible fear like the mental scar of an old spiritual injury. Laure, Laure Abel. Only to recall her name made him faintly sick. He remembered clearly the day of her death from the sudden failure of a weak heart. The edge of an even greater darkness threatened his being. He would never, James told himself violently, come to Harrodsburg again. His family there must, in the future, do without him. It was too damned full of wretched mementoes. Harrodsburg, he realized, leaving it at a hand gallop the following morning, was, where he was concerned, the past of Kentucky, the olden days, the land on the western waters. It belonged to the time of its fort and early Boonesborough, to Richard Henderson and Kenton, James Ray and the McAfees and the Reverend John Lythe, the earliest settlers and trappers. He, in his own family, represented the break from the past—together with Frankfort and Lexington, and, even, a steamboat on the Kentucky river, he belonged to a new state.

In reality it was a new world, especially in the United States, after Mr. Jefferson's boundless western purchases. James seriously doubted the expediency of that. So much territory, even if it could ever be settled, would attack the balance, the necessary authority, of eastern power and government. His Federalism, James was convinced, did not conflict with the changes about him. Damn it, a government must have force. There must be law and a stable currency. Specie. Order. That single word, more than any other, expressed James Sash's conception of

what was desirable. There was a visible stir of events in Bardstown absent from Harrodsburg. A vigorous fiddling sounded in the taverns and there were valuable horses fast to the hitching rails. He saw posted on a tree notice of a purse race free for any horse, mare or gelding; weight for age agreeable to the rules of New Market. Bardstown, in spite of its strong religious influence, was like that—a place of drinking and high play and racing. He proceeded, relaxed and easy on his horse, to Bruton Abel's house, where Nancy was immediately in his arms.

She was, he realized, extremely pretty; Nancy had grown amazingly in the past year. She had the McKee eyes rather than his—his mother's eyes—but her hair was very fair, a strange paleness that might have been lightly powdered with ashes. She conducted him, holding him tightly by the hand, into the house. "Here's father," she cried excitedly; "here's father and the Indians didn't hurt him." Nancy cried a little. His own heart was very full of feeling. Mary Abel appeared at once and kissed him placidly. She was a large woman with a broad calm face; it was so calm, with a diminutive mouth and dense brown eyes, that it seemed to be made from a more solid material than flesh and blood. She sat down at once, folding her hands in a stiff black silk lap. "I have prayed for you," she told James Sash. "Interceded with the dear saints. We heard very little since the River Raisin.

"A great deal has happened here," she went on in a voice without any emphasis or color; "a great deal to the eternal glory of God. At last Father Nerinckx has his convent. After so much difficulty. It is called Little Loretto and it's near St. Charles Borromeo on Hardin's

creek. Dear Mother Ann is superior. She was Nancy Rhodes. There must be ten sisters already. They are novices and there are postulants. Three took the veil in April a year ago. Mary Rhodes and Christina Stuart and Nancy Havern. They are now holy women. Father Nerinckx calls them the Little Sisters of the Friends of Mary at the Foot of the Cross. They have a home of their own—it looks something like the old Harrodsburg fort, with a school and a house for the dear father and a church and other buildings. It is an order dedicated to poverty and chastity and silence. A teaching order. You can't imagine how elevated the sisters are. No shoes except in winter and bare straw for beds. They haven't even a proper dress, nothing more than coarse black veils and ordinary clothes dyed with oak bark and copperas. But there is a beautiful statue of the Blessed Virgin in their chapel Father Nerinckx brought from Belgium. Only God keeps them alive."

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James Sash gave no more than a polite air of attention to the details of the Sisterhood of Loretto. He was, actually, intent upon his daughter Nancy. It seemed gloomy to him at Bruton Abel's; the house itself was sad and the conversation, he was positive, without the gayety so necessary to the happiness of youth. Yes, he must arrange for Nancy to live with him in Frankfort. He had no doubt he could get some respectable woman—perhaps someone among his own large connection—to keep his house. James gave up the idea of marriage. Bruton Abel

appeared; he was as silent as his wife was talkative; but it was evident that James Sash's appearance gave him great pleasure. All Bruton's family collected for supper: Kate and her husband, Eale Sympson, a local surveyor; Leonidas, married to Ann Herries and turned devoutly Catholic; Manoah, who had read law with James at Frankfort and was practicing in the Nelson county courts; and Felicity, the youngest child, only a little older than Nancy Sash. There was, in addition, Flora, James Sash's aunt, with her husband, Jarrot Bensalem. James disliked him intensely. He even found his appearance and dress annoying. Jarrot Bensalem was a small emaciated man with a copper skin tight on the bones of his face and black eyes at once restless and sharp. Bruton Abel was certain there was Powhatan blood in him. All his ideas were totally opposed to the convictions that sustained James Sash. He had arrived in Kentucky, from Hardcastle Court, Virginia, at the extreme of the French excitement, and immediately supported the Republican cause. Jarrod organized the Jacobin club in Bardstown; he was familiar with Charles Depeau, Genêt's agent at Lexington; it was said he had helped to corrupt the venerable George Rogers Clark; and, as a consequence, James thought, he wore coats with extravagantly rolled collars, ridiculous stocks and preposterous waistcoats.

His temper, however, was like confined gunpowder; Jarrot Bensalem was known to be a fatal duellist. But all James's distaste for him, he realized, was more than returned by Flora. He remembered that she had always regarded him with an ill-concealed bitterness. He couldn't, for the life of him, think why. Flora said to

James Sash, "How does it feel to be a hero. We understand you are a hero. Like General Adair and Colonel Richard Johnson." Nonsense, he replied, he was nothing of the sort and his family very well knew it. "I detest fighting," he asserted. Jarrot looked at him attentively. "I suppose it is a question of principle with you then," he observed. "I was surprised to hear you had enlisted again against your friends the English." James Sash replied, "I would have preferred the French, but they were beaten so long ago it's hopeless to wish for that." Jarrot Bensalem's mouth drew into an ugly line. "The French no longer have any interest in Kentucky," he said; "why should they fight for it? Kentucky was nothing but a wilderness when they found it and it will soon be a wilderness again if the Federalists return to power. Federalists," he added positively, "nothing of the sort—Royalists."

"A royalty," James replied, "is better than a rabble." He saw that Jarrot was rapidly losing his temper, and he turned away to Mary Abel. "I can't express how much I owe you and Bruton for keeping Nancy all this time," he proceeded. "It has been a great advantage for her." Mary Abel looked at him with a gathering dismay. "You are not going to take her off!" she cried. "Just now when it's so important for her to come under the right influence." There were tears in her eyes. "Yes," James replied; "I am afraid so. After all, you have done more than anyone could ask, and she is my daughter. I must see something of her and she must see me." Mary Abel, suppressing her emotion, murmured a sentence in which the word heretic was audible. Nancy sent her father a deep

look of happiness and gratitude. She was really a lovely-looking girl. Conversation at the table drooped; an awkward situation developed. Jarrot Bensalem was scowling into his teacup; Flora was clearly in a state of brittle anger; even Nancy and Felicity Abel were silent.

He couldn't stay here, James Sash told himself, preparing for bed. He would leave at once. It was, if anything, worse than at Beriah Mace's. He felt devilish sorry for Bruton. But, on account of Nancy, it was a good thing he had come when he did. Perhaps, he continued, thinking of his daughter, he could get some ground on Wilkinson Street, near where the river turned at Frankfort. In the morning Nancy would not hear of his going that day. "You must stay until tomorrow," she declared; "then tomorrow again and tomorrow and tomorrow." He was forced to compromise between his desire and her affectionate importunities. That was Tuesday, very well, he would remain until Thursday morning. Early. Wednesday he accompanied Manoah to his law room, he looked over some briefs, and gave him advice. If Manoah continued to do well it was in James's mind to invite him to Frankfort. He needed a young partner who knew the law and would work at it.

James Sash returned late in the afternoon to Bruton Abel's house. A primitive wagon, without cover, and a half-starved horse driven by an old man, stood at the door. He glanced casually at it, and, with his head down, thinking, he entered the hall. James saw Mary Abel, seated and talking, then he was conscious of a figure standing beyond her wrapped in black. A woman with her head closely hidden by a black veil. An instant feeling

of faint sickness swept over him. A cold sense of dread tightened around his throat. It was exactly as though one of the darkest of his memories was embodied and actual before him. Mary Abel was impatient. "This is Sister Euphrasia," she explained; "a Lorettine. The dear sister has taken her first vows. The convent makes a little money by weaving and selling woollen homespun over the country. That is why she is here."

"Of course," James said, in a flat voice. "You told me about them." The dread, though, did not decrease. He was enraged at himself. He gazed at the novice and saw, as Mary had said, that her habit, an ordinary full dress stained rusty black, was of the poorest material procurable. There couldn't, although the day was cold, be any warmth in it. Her shoes were coarse and heavy, wooden soles and hard leather; there was a crude leather belt at her waist. It was ridiculous, but his legs were so weak that he was forced to find a seat. His knees were like dust. Mary Abel turned an annoyed back on him. "If you will wait a moment, Sister Euphrasia," she continued, "I will get the money. Perhaps you will sit down." Sister Euphrasia made no answer. She remained erect. Mary Abel hesitated, glaring at James, but he didn't move. He was incapable of movement.

It seemed to him that, alone in the hall with Sister Euphrasia, she swayed on her feet. Her head was turned from him; he could see nothing but an uncouth and shapeless black silhouette. Unreasonably he wanted to shake her, demand why she had been there—like one of the worst of his dreams—when he came in. Suddenly he detested the coarseness of her veil, the poverty of her

dress, her clumsy shoes. He hated and resented them all. James Sash was infuriated by her silence and immobility. If she had sat down it would have been better. She was too damned humble. He rose sharply, still a trifle dizzy, and moved to where he stood before her. The veil hid her face completely. "Sit down," he said harshly. "Sit down or you will fall down." There was no sign that she heard him. His illogical anger increased; with a brutal hand on her shoulder—he found it shockingly thin—James Sash forced Sister Euphrasia into a chair. "Now," he said, breathing heavily. That unexpected violence disarranged her veil. For a moment he saw a tense white face, a half-opened pale mouth, wide frightened blue eyes. That was all blotted out, turned to blackness, by the hurriedly replaced veil. He stood looking angrily down at her. "If you are driving back to Loretto in that broken-down wagon, and with no better than you have on now, you'll die of the cold," he asserted. At last she spoke. In a voice at once hurried and uncertain she said, "Oh Suffering Jesus. Oh, Sorrowful Mary." Wide blue eyes and a pale mouth. She was young. A strange conviction seized him. "I don't believe you mean any of this," he declared. "Not a word of it. I don't believe you are a good novice or nun or whatever it is you are. I am certain you don't want to be." He thought that, for an instant, through the shadow of her veil, he had seen again the blueness of her gaze. James Sash heard Mary Abel approaching. He abruptly left the hall.

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THERE was whisky in a heavy dark glass bottle with a pitcher of water in James Sash's room and he took two big drinks in immediate succession. Then he sat down. He had had a shock. It was extraordinary. The suddenness of his encounter with that silent black figure, before he'd had time to be reasonable, had disconcerted him. Even without the especial circumstances of his own past she was depressing enough. His anger at the whole affair increased rather than grew cool. That was the reaction from being startled. Upset. James illogically transferred all his resentment to Sister Euphrasia. He remembered her name without a second's difficulty. Subconsciously. She presented a ridiculous figure in a lugubrious drapery insufficient against the approach of winter. He could tell from the thinness of her shoulder that she was half-starved. It was that kind of a thinness. Her face had been as white as her veil was black. A pale mouth, half-open, intense blue eyes. Her eyes were the only show of color, of youth, about her. James recalled his conviction that she would never be a good nun, that actually she cared little if anything about being a religious. That was what the Catholics called it—a religious. He remembered the tone of her absurd and dolorous exclamation. Her voice had been weak. Without conviction. He asked Mary Abel, later, to tell him more details about the Lorettines. Instead she explained at length about Father Nerinckx. "He is a saint," she declared; "when they were rebuilding St. Charles Borromeo he lifted whole logs and put them into place in the walls. It was a miracle. Yet there are complaints about him, and not all from Presbyterians. Some Catholics will only learn the truth in the fires of

Purgatory. They say the dear father is too severe, that he will not allow dancing and innocent pleasures. From what I have heard he is right. The pleasures around Bardstown are anything but innocent. Cursing and gambling and drunkenness everywhere. He has given the missions their most sacred objects—an Ecce Homo for the altar-piece at St. Charles, the Crowning of the Blessed Virgin at Holy Mary's, he gave an Assumption to St. Joseph's and the Flagellation hanging in St. Barbara's Church."

"Who was Sister Euphrasia?" he asked.

Mary Abel looked at him suspiciously. She hesitated, but it was evident she could find no reason to ignore his question. "She was Liza Rosier," she replied; "her parents were from Maryland. They came to Kentucky in Mr. Miles' boat before Liza was born. The Indians fired on them about Louisville and killed the steersman and all their horses. I remember the excitement. We had just moved away from Harrodsburg. Then the Indians shot Mr. Rosier, on Cloyd's creek, near the Rolling Fork. Mrs. Rosier's brother, Henry Gourde, came to live with them, but he was worthless. He spent all his money and time on whisky and horses. Liza's mother didn't live long after that; when she died there was no one but Henry Gourde; the Church was our Holy Mother's design, Her intercession, for Liza. She was a stubborn girl and had shown signs of waywardness."

James Sash was amazed at the correctness of his feeling about Liza Rosier's profession of religion. Necessity and the weight of her devout world had forced her into the Convent of Loretto. She could not, it was obvious, continue to live with an uncle named Gourde who drank

his life away at the race-tracks. He wondered— she was at least twenty—why she hadn't married. With her blue eyes and pale mouth. I'll ask her, James thought. Obviously that was nonsense. He couldn't even speak to her. She was Sister Euphrasia, a Lorettine novice. She had taken the vows of obedience and silence and chastity. If he did have another opportunity to see her she would only say Oh Suffering Jesus in a small voice. No, he'd be damned if she would! James wondered if she slept with her veil over her face. He supposed she let only God see her eyes. Her blue eyes. This much, he repeated, was evident—she was not born to be a nun, Sister Euphrasia, but Liza, Liza Rosier surrounded by delicate and beautiful objects. Comfort. Comfort, hell no—luxury. That was what she was like. What she needed. What she wanted. James Sash was certain of all that from the merest glimpse of her face.

He pictured Liza Rosier in a dress of bright colors, a wide ribbon around her soft waist, her face still pale but not pallid; with no cursed black shadow over eyes like gentian flowers. That is how he saw her in his imagination. Or else wrapped in furs, in a cloak of mink. He was forced to smile at his extravagant notions. But there was a reality back of them that was not extravagant. He had been deeply moved by Liza Rosier—never Sister Euphrasia—because of the dark figure, the dark memory, that had remained out of childhood to oppress his mind. Even at the first shock of meeting that black shape in the hall of Bruton Abel's house he had been stirred, disturbed, by the parallel. He owned two distinct emotions connected with it—one concerned himself and the other

was an increasing pity for Liza. Chance had been so brutal with her. With her helpless youngness.

He did not agree with Mary Abel, instinctively he detested the Catholic Church—he could not see that the isolated and hard and unnatural life of a nun was a blessing for Liza Rosier. It might be a blessing for some unnatural or wholly inferior women but not for her. His other feeling was a pure dread of blackness, especially a blackness folded like a Spanish shawl about a woman's head. He hated and feared the thought of a life that was no better than a penance, a black preparation for death. God, he had seen enough death in the last ten years. Now he wanted life and wine and fiddles and dancing. His necessity to return to Frankfort at the first possible opportunity was forgotten; on Thursday, after dinner, instead of riding in the direction of Harrodsburg he turned south toward the head of Hardin's creek. James Sash wanted to see the Convent of Loretto.

It was farther than he remembered. More than twenty miles. The afternoon began to be spent. Finally he came upon the Church of St. Charles Borromeo, a structure of logs with a priest's small dwelling attached to it; not far away, beyond some tulip poplar trees, stood the convent. A rough road lay past it, and he walked his horse to where his view was unobstructed. The convent was exactly as Mary Abel had described it, very much like the old Kentucky forts—two rows of log buildings closed on their outer walls by fencing and with fences at either end. There was the beginning of a clearing and garden reaching up a hill; below the land fell away to the creek. Aside from that there was an open plot with a large cross planted

in the center, an arbor of young evergreens around the cross, and a solitary hole dug in the hard ground. The plot, James Sash realized, was a graveyard; the hole was a grave. The late afternoon was dull; the earth, the trees, the sky, were bleak. A bell tolled with a lonely and hollow vibration from St. Charles' Church.

A thin strange sound rose from the convent into the silence that succeeded to the ringing of the bell. James saw a small procession leave the rectangular buildings and move slowly in the direction of the church. It was a procession of little children, clad in utmost poverty, supported by four sisters. The singing was in Latin—the voices of the women rose shrill and high; the children followed in an uncertain treble. A black-clad figure led the procession, a black shape followed at its end; there was a figure in black on either side of the children. The chant fluctuated, it rose and fell in a depressing key, the exact counterpart of the melancholy end of the year. The children were neither near him nor far away; he could see the individual features of the little girls at once pinched with cold and pretentiously solemn. Their voices were like the piping of frogs. They were, he realized, going to the graveyard of the church; and then James understood what it was about—they were singing prayers for the dead. Latin prayers for the dead. He watched the sisters gather their charges together among the graves. There was a faint harsh sound of crows in the air. The day grew darker.

It was probable that one of the women was Liza Rosier. He couldn't tell. If she were there she would see him sitting motionless on his horse and watching her. James

wanted to ride into the graveyard, scatter the children; and, finding Liza, take her up on his horse and carry her away to the happiness and pleasures of Frankfort; rescue Liza Rosier from the past.

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This fantastic conception instantly grew into an obsession with him. James Sash sat in his room, beside the bottle of whisky, and ignored Nancy; he was silent with the members of Bruton Abel's family. He must, he thought, take Liza Rosier out of the darkness that surrounded her. She became merged into his own need to free himself from the influence of the memories that clouded his existence. If he accomplished one, he believed, the other would follow. At the same time the blue of Liza Rosier's eyes filled him with a different and distinct emotion—he thought of them, he thought of her, with an increasing warm feeling. The paleness of her mouth was never out of his mind. He suddenly realized that he not only wanted to take her away from the Convent of Loretto—he was determined to marry her. That, of course, had all the while been at the back of his desire. Then and then only could he properly protect her; give her everything a charming woman ought to possess. James Sash, a half-empty glass of whisky and water in his hand, interrupted this to remind himself that actually he knew nothing, nothing at all, about her. He put that uncomfortable realization out of his mind. It was nonsensical. Liza Rosier was charming.

He had no idea, now, of how to proceed; he could not

see her at the convent; it wasn't probable that she would come soon again with folds of homespun wool for Mary Abel; and then he thought of her uncle, Henry Gourde. Mary Abel had said that his life was spent at the races. Well, James hoped so. Henry Gourde, he discovered, lived in one of the old cabins along Beech Fork, under a mile from the town; and he found the dwelling without difficulty. It was so primitive that it still had, repeatedly patched, a cats-and-clay chimney. The voice that responded to his knocking was vigorous; inside he found an old man with an antiquated blue coat and brass buttons, an alert gaze and a humorous, weatherworn face, seated with a leg in bandages and elevated to a second chair. "I can't get up," he said; "you can see that; but there is whisky, or else there isn't, in the cupboard. I have it on my mind it's all drank up."

He could, for the moment, James assured him, do without whisky. "Mr. Argoll's mare, Baytop, raised her hoof on me," Henry Gourde explained. "But I'm glad I didn't kick the mare. She'll run the three-quarters better than one twenty, against the Povey horse, Sunday, or I don't know a gelding from a stallion." James Sash said, "You are Liza Rosier's uncle." Henry Gourde corrected him. "I was. Now she is Sister Euphrasia. She has shaken off her earthly bounds." He understood that, James replied impatiently. He went on in a hard voice, "I want to see her, and the way to do that was to see you first, since you are the only connection she has in Kentucky. There was a possibility you could get her here and let me know. I must talk to her," James Sash asserted. "It is enormously important."

"It's for no good, that's plain on the face of it," Henry Gourde answered cheerfully. "Anyways, she'd never come. She couldn't. Father Nerinckx wouldn't let her. The superior, Mother Ann, wouldn't let her. The saints wouldn't hark to it." James Sash interrupted him. "I will give you fifty dollars in gold." It was, he recognized, an extravagant sum in specie, but this was not a time for careful measurements. "I was expecting that, or a sum of it," Henry Gourde admitted candidly. "I was all ready to curse at losing it." He was silent. "There is old Mr. Gates, who lives at the convent," he went on finally; "but he'd carry anything was said to him to the dear father. Do you know Father Nerinckx?" No, James said. "He has the strength of ten men," Henry Gourde explained. "One of the Hardins, and a big man too, had took offense and stopped him riding from St. Stephen's Church. Father Nerinckx reasoned with him, but Hardin cut a stirrup leather and the holy father came down. Hardin said afterward he thought the horse had fell on him. No, I'll say nothing to old Mr. Gates. The woman who carried meals to the father when he lived in the sacristy of St. Charles has moved to the convent. I've known her for a pitch of years.

"Anyways," he asserted, "here I am in mortal pain with my leg and a good Catholic—I have a right to see a sister who was my niece. Would you leave the gold today? The odds are better on the mare now than they will be Sunday." James Sash rose and laid the money on a table. "When shall I come back?" he asked. "Monday," Henry Gourde told him; "early in the afternoon. Gates could leave Sister Euphrasia here for a little driving into town."

On Sunday, at supper, James learned that Mr. Argoll's mare, Baytop, beat Mr. Povey's entry at three-quarters of a mile by seven lengths. Her best heat was one minute, nineteen and three-fifths seconds. He hoped that Henry Gourde had secured a long odds. When, early Monday afternoon, he knocked on the door of Gourde's cabin there was no answer, no voice or sound of steps within. He knocked again, more loudly, and then he tried the door. It opened. Sister Euphrasia was standing in the middle of the floor. She was, he saw, surprised, totally unprepared for his appearance. James could plainly hear awkward retreating footsteps behind an inner door. "I had to talk to you," he proceeded at once. "If you sit down it will make it easier for us." She didn't move. "I said if you sat down it would make it easier," he repeated. "I have a great deal to say. If you remember you sat down the last time." She moved slowly, reluctantly, to a small stiff chair against a wall.

"I am James Sash," he began, steadily regarding her covered face. "Mrs. Abel married my mother's brother. Bruton Abel is my uncle. I live in Frankfort and I am a lawyer. I am not poor. Well, I asked Henry Gourde to bring you here, to let me see you, because I want to take you away from the convent. I want to carry you to Frankfort and marry you." There wasn't a movement of Sister Euphrasia's rusty black habit, a sign that she heard him. "This is strange but not as strange as it sounds," he explained. "You must listen why. Mary Abel told me your father was killed by Indians," he paused; even in his present need it was difficult for him to go on. "My mother was killed by Indians too," James said at last.

"My father had been gone more than ten years and she married Doctor Mackenny, in Harrodsburg. Harrodstown. He was older than she was but splendid. Everyone agreed about that. They married in 1789, and Mackenny took her out to live at Fountain Blue. It was more than three miles from the town, and lonely. Too far then. Mackenny was advised against it, but he said the Indians were leaving Kentucky. He insisted it was safe. You see, he was tired of being a doctor all the year and wanted to plant corn and rye. He was safe—for four years. They had three children, all girls, Jane and Nettie and Agnes. Jane was three years old, Nettie was two, Agnes was under one; I was at Cincinnati, in Scott's command with General Wayne. Well, after the battle of Fallen Timbers Kentucky was safe from Indians. But that was too late to save them at Fountain Blue. The doctor and my mother and Jane and Nettie and Agnes. They were all to come to my grandfather's for supper, and when they didn't he sent to see the why of it. Mackenny was on the ground before their house. Tomahawks and scalping knives. He had tried to hold the knives away with his hands. Nettie—they told her by her yellow dress—was hanging with her foot tied to the latch string. The others—no," corrected that phrase; "the rest was in the house." He stopped, keeping his gaze on the woman before him, folded in black. A long slow shudder passed over her. "That," he said, sudden and harsh, "is the reason I hate the past. What are called the fine old days. Fine!" His voice, his scorn, were metallic.

"But before that," he informed her, "I was afraid of blackness. I was especially afraid of women in black veils.

With their faces hidden. Like yours is now. I can't explain that to you. You will have to accept it. When I saw you in Bruton Abel's hall, without any preparation, it came back over me. For a second I was frightened the way a child is frightened. God, I thought you were the past. Then I saw you weren't. I saw you were just caught in the past. Like myself."

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THE silence that succeeded his voice was made more absolute by the faint sound of the fire of logs dying on the limestone hearth. "We are both in the shadow of the past," he repeated; "in a dark memory. But we can get out of it. Together. Together and never apart. I am certain of that. If I leave you here you will go back to Loretto and slowly die of the winter. If I have to leave you I'll never get out of the dark. But there is no question of that. You must see it. And come with me. It will be easy. I will leave clothes here for you; then we'll go away to Frankfort and get married; we will live in Frankfort with my daughter, Nancy, she is fourteen, in a brick house with a garden. The house will be bright and the garden bright with flowers. We'll have people to dinner and drink Madeira and laugh. People and wine and laughing. But, better than that, we will be free, free from fear." He moved nearer to her. James Sash could have touched her head, bowed in somber wrapping. "Answer me," he insisted; "say something; not about sorrowful Mary." At last, in a muffled voice, she replied:

"You are talking to Liza Rosier. She isn't here. She is dead."

"That is damned nonsense," James answered sharply. "It is hypocritical and worse. Mostly it's cowardly. You are Liza Rosier and never Sister Euphrasia. You have been talked into this. Prayed into it. You don't understand—in no time at all it would be over; you'd be in Frankfort in a dress with ribbons and pearl chains and bracelets. Happy." She was silent again. A sense of failure began to invade James, a feeling that he was getting nowhere, that he had been unable to change Sister Euphrasia, a religious, back into Liza Rosier who was a woman. He told himself that he must succeed. It was imperative for them both. Added to this he had, now, a great desire for her, a tyrannical necessity to hold her in his arms and kiss scarlet the paleness of her lips. James Sash wanted to look into her gentian blue eyes. He leaned forward swiftly and tore off her veil. She gasped, and then sat upright, motionless and rigid. He had dislodged a cap that held her hair in tight bondage, and a heavy lustrous red-brown mass slipped across a pallid cheek and over her shoulder.

"Now," James Sash said, speaking with difficulty, his heart laboring, "we are rid of that." He was, he saw, right. Liza Rosier was charming. Lovely. She gazed at him with an expression of pure terror. "This is a mortal sin," she half whispered. "It is if you believe whatever priests tell you," he asserted vigorously. "It is if you think it is. But not unless you do. You can't breathe in that veil. Your cheeks will have no color without light and air. Light and air," he declared; "air and light. A plant

can't live unless it has them and neither can you." He wanted desperately to raise her face up to his and kiss her. He didn't. The quality of her immobility, her suffering, brought his desire to nothing. "The wagon will soon be back for you," he proceeded; "we must make our arrangements for the future. Today is Monday. I can have clothes here this time tomorrow. I'll send word to Loretto Mrs. Abel wants more homespun wool. That she must see you at once. The convent is so poor they won't ignore that. Really," he said, "it is very simple."

As he stood before her, speaking intently, she slowly coiled her gleaming hair and caught it under its cap. The veil had fallen on the floor; she recovered it. James Sash watched her with a feeling of helplessness. The realization of failure struck like a savage knife into his heart. She covered her head. She covered her mouth. She veiled her eyes. With all her color hidden, and the line of her shoulders dejected, once more she became a novice, Sister Euphrasia. "I won't go without you," he cried; "I can't. I mustn't." It was no better than flinging his voice against the log walls of the cabin. His determination changed to dread and the dread to bitterness and rebellion. "They have killed you already," he declared. "You are just a ghost with other ghosts in a graveyard." There was a stir beyond the inner door, Henry Gourde. "I am too late then," he continued, "too late to save what would have made you the loveliest woman imaginable. Now you will just be a Lorettine in dirty black clothes."

He left the cabin in a sudden violent swirl of anger.

In his room he returned to the bottle of whisky. I'll

leave tomorrow, he told himself; I will get a carriage and take Nancy. She can't stay in this mouldy swamp. Jarrot Bensalem appeared later, aggressive as customary. "It's a wonder you are not made a judge in the Court of Appeals," he said to James; "it's getting so antiquated you would be entirely at home." James Sash was short with him. "The English common law wasn't established yesterday," he replied; "justice is not a party principle." Bensalem's color deepened. Mary Abel interrupted them. "It is always the same with the affairs of this world," she declared; "disagreement and trouble. Peace lies with the blessed saints. I often think how fortunate the sisters are at sacred Loretto, keeping their vigils and praying through the night."

"It would be better," James Sash told her harshly, "if they slept through the night, and on something more appropriate than the earth. What good does it do anyone if a handful of miserable women, perishing with cold and hunger, try to sing?" Mary Abel placidly replied that, since he was a heretic, he couldn't be expected to understand the mysteries and holiness of the Church. This as well exasperated him. "The Church!" he repeated; "why do you say the Church? There are a hundred churches. Maybe a thousand." His aunt's face remained blandly undisturbed.

After all, James found later, he could not leave for Frankfort the following day, since he insisted upon taking Nancy and all her belongings with him—he couldn't arrange for a carriage until Wednesday morning. The weather continued to be gray and cold. Depressing. He thought incessantly of Liza Rosier in the bleakness of

the Convent of Loretto. His feelings changed from a conviction of irreparable loss to bitter resentment, anger, then back to his sense of loss again. His failure with her left him definitely poorer in spirit. He was thirty-seven years old but his body and mind were weary as those of an old man.

When the noon dinner at Bruton Abel's was finished —this was Tuesday—James rode his horse out of Bardstown, he wanted to see once more, before he left it forever, the Convent at Loretto where Liza Rosier was a novice. Liza Rosier, now, was Sister Euphrasia. Well, damn Sister Euphrasia! He sat for a very long while looking down at the rude log enclosure of the convent. Part of the fence was not completed, and he saw two sisters chopping with hatchets at the stumps left from trees that had stood inside their walls. He could hear the slight almost futile impact of the blows. It would take them a long while to destroy the stumps. A trail of smoke, no grayer than the day, rose from a chimney. The bell at St. Charles Borromeo tolled with an iron note. The sound of chanted Latin prayers succeeded it. The sisters took the little girls in their charge to the graveyard. The procession moved slowly over the uneven ground. The elder voices were high and flat; the children sang with a small, a desperate and uncomprehending, determination. It was like the piping of frogs. A sister led the way, a sister followed, a sister was on either hand of her charges. The black figure nearest James Sash halted. She hesitated and then walked away from the procession. She began to run. She ran stumbling toward him. A holy woman in the background cried out and raised her arms toward heaven.

The children, standing pressed together, sobbed hysterically.

James Sash turned his horse and advanced toward the hurrying shape. Her veil became loose; it fell off and lay deserted on the ground. A stream of red-brown hair fell richly on her shoulders. "Take me away!" she cried, "it's Liza Rosier. I'm frightened. I am so frightened I can't breathe." He bent over and lifted her up before him. She was so light, so thin, that his face was wet with tears. They left the Convent of Loretto, the Friends of Mary at the Foot of the Cross, in a gallop.

IV

THE IMMEASURABLE horror Manoah Abel had, only that minute, left under the archway to the court house was no worse, he saw in a searing flash of comprehension, than all that lay directly before him. He was placed midway of two appalling situations. Manoah Abel was walking in a hurried mechanical tread over Broadway toward Wilkinson Street; Capitol Square lay behind him; he had passed the one story row of whitewashed law offices between Haley Street and Catfish Alley; he crossed Washington Street and would soon be at Wilkinson. He had no idea of what, when he saw Liza Sash, he would say. He couldn't—his brain was largely numb—think what he would tell Nancy. A vision of the Sash children, Gabriel and Sarah McKee and Eliza Rose, filled his mind. Gabriel at most was only a little more than four

years old, Eliza Rose, the youngest, less than two. The day, it was the first week of June, was extravagantly hot; but his hands were dry like dust and cold. A sick hatred of all life, and of dying, possessed him; waves of acute nausea swept up from his stomach and left him dizzy; he cursed in a loud flat voice.

Manoah Abel realized, suddenly, that he had turned to the left; he saw John Brown's gardens and great brick house; he was practically at the corner of Wapping Street. James Sash had built an ornamental wooden fence, painted white, about his grounds, and Manoah opened the latched gate with a blundering hand. It was worse, even, than he had thought it might be—Liza Sash, in a rose-colored muslin gown, was on the lawn before her house. Nancy, in pale green, was close by. Caroline and Amanda, the negro nurses, had Liza's three children about the bench under the great holly tree. Liza Sash saw Manoah first. "Nancy," she called cheerfully, "here is Manoah. He can't stay away from you an hour. I don't know how you'll get along, make any money, after you are married. It will be very hard on James and the law."

She started to walk toward Manoah Abel; then, suddenly, she stopped in the gravelled path; a puzzled expression took the place of her gayety. "Manoah," she said; "something has happened. Something is the matter." Nancy quickly came up to them. She laid a hand on Liza Sash's shoulder. "What is it?" she asked them both. Manoah said nothing. He couldn't, then, speak. It was all too unutterably terrible. Liza was white. "It's James!" she exclaimed. She put out an arm as though to shield herself from an invisible impending blow. "He has been

hurt. There was an accident." Her voice grew sharper, shrill. "Wait, darling," Nancy told her. "Perhaps I had better talk to Manoah first." Liza Sash pushed her violently away.

"I know," she said; "I know. I can see it in Manoah. James is dead. He has been killed."

A profound momentary stillness enveloped them. Manoah heard Gabriel Sash talking with a child's eager rapidity. One of the nurses softly laughed. He remained silent; his gaze was lowered and his hands still clenched. Without warning Liza Sash screamed. She screamed so loudly that Manoah, shocked to the limit of his endurance, thought she must be heard at the court house. The piercing sound of her voice might almost have stirred in James Sash's murdered consciousness. The nurses, the children, gathered in a stricken group. An audible sobbing filled the air left unbearably still by the dying away of Liza Sash's cry. Nancy held her stepmother with a rigid arm around her waist. "You must let me go," Liza explained to her; "I must be with James." Manoah, at last, was forced to speak. "I am sorry," he said stupidly; "you can't do that. It—it happens to be impossible." He turned desperately to Nancy. "I didn't want to tell you like this. You must see I couldn't help it."

She asked, "Is he dead?" Manoah nodded. Yes. "But Liza can't be with him?" He shook his head. No. A whiteness like fine powder settled upon Nancy's face. "Was it a duel?" she asked. Manoah, for an instant, lost control of himself. "Jarrot Bensalem assassinated him." He stopped with a violent choking effort. Nancy Sash went on in a voice of lifeless comprehension, "Mr. Bensalem

had a knife." She swayed with her eyes shut. Then she turned to Liza Sash. "You must come into the house. We'll go together. There is nothing else we can do. Manoah will tend to everything." Liza wouldn't listen to that. She must be with James, with her husband, she repeated. His death was the wages of her old mortal sin. She had killed him, just as she had slain her own soul, when she fled with him from the Convent of Loretto. She began to struggle, her face drawn and unnatural, with Nancy. Nancy said to Manoah, "You will have to help me." He put an arm around Liza Sash; they half urged and half carried her into the house.

The hall, at the middle of afternoon, was pleasantly cool. The doors on either hand were closed and the light subdued. "Where shall we take her," Manoah asked; "into James's office?" No, Nancy replied decidedly. "It will be better to get her upstairs, in her own room, at once." A heavy burden sagged into Manoah's arm: Liza had fainted. He laid her in the enormous bed, with great high posts like trees of square polished mahogany, she had shared with James Sash. Then he stood awkwardly watching the spasmodic crying that distorted Nancy's features. She motioned for him to leave the room. "Send Cassia here," she managed to say. "If you can, Manoah, wait for me. Don't go away from the house, don't leave us, unless you must."

He waited for Nancy Sash in the small drawingroom at the left of the hall. It opened into the diningroom, a formal interior with an indigo blue and yellow rug from China and stiff chairs upholstered in Turkey red. Heavy window hangings of blue brocade were drawn against

the heat. Manoah Abel paced across the room and back, he sat on the edge of a chair, and then he fell to pacing once more. His whole being was still vibrating, sick, with the horror he had witnessed. He again saw Jarrot Bensalem's inhuman copper-colored face; he heard James Sash's bravery of words and agonized protest; the rest was mercifully lost. A surge of men had closed about the end of the struggle, gathered from the court house and the Square, from Broadway and Lewis Street. He had recognized Hugh Innes and Harry Thornton, without hats from the sitting of the court, Achilles Sneed, Jeremiah Green, the new Baptist preacher, John J. Marshall and Lewis Major, who was a magistrate. It didn't matter whom he had seen, Manoah told himself. He said aloud, experimentally, "James is dead." That, for him, Manoah Abel, was a frightful calamity. James had brought him every benefit that his life held. He had first, raising him above the narrow confinements of existence in Bardstown, instructed him in the law; then, long before Manoah had justified such a good opinion of his ability, James had brought him to Frankfort to be his partner. He had come there to practice and live, Manoah recalled, early in 1814. Five years ago. He had not been a complete failure, the truth was; the prospects for their firm were increasingly brilliant; but now there was no firm; Jarrot Bensalem had ended it with a knife. Nancy Sash came quietly into the room; her face was heavy with suffering but she had stopped crying. "I don't know what to ask you," she admitted; "I don't know how much I can stand."

An overwhelming passion of grief stripped Manoah of

all his self-control. He slipped down on his knees beside her and buried his face in the pale scented material of her dress. An occasional short sob escaped in a battle with his emotions. Nancy Sash softly touched his bowed head. The rapid footsteps of the children, the heavier tread of the nurses, passed through the hall. Manoah recovered command of his feelings. He rose. "I can tell you this," he proceeded, gazing down at Nancy; "your father was warned by all his friends, but he would not carry a weapon. I don't have to tell you how he hated such things. He never, with Jarrot Bensalem, had the shadow of a chance."

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Manoah Abel's room was at the back of the Sash house, on the second floor; windows opened on the garden falling away to the river hidden by the close summer foliage; and, after James Sash's funeral, Manoah sat there for a long while gazing thoughtfully into the flower-scented evening. A pale glimmer along the leaves showed that the moon was rising. He considered, mostly, James Sash, a man of extraordinary fineness. His opinion was not the result of an especial affection—every notable citizen from that part of Kentucky who could attend the funeral had been there. On all hands the expressions of appreciation were superlative: a man of the mildest temper who, forgetful of everything but the necessity of his state, had gone to war again and again; an individual of the greatest imaginable humanity who yet as a lawyer was inflexible in the service of justice. Justice, Manoah added, and not

politics or preferment. An incorruptibly pure and elevated spirit, he told himself.

That, in a way, had brought about his death. James Sash, at a time when such principles were both rare and dangerous in Kentucky, remained a Federalist. He had been an enemy to Jefferson and supported Henry Clay. More than that, and leading directly to his assassination, he had belonged to the Anti-relief party. Well, Manoah thought, so did he; but his convictions had only a part of the candor that upheld James Sash. James had never believed in paper money; that was, in money without adequate—without, as a matter of fact, any—security. Judge Bibb and the Relief party, and Jarrot Bensalem, had wholly differed from him. They, when it was evident that hard times were upon them, wanted more money; cheap money; and a financial warfare had immediately risen between the debtors, who demanded relief, and creditors who would not support any scheme that lessened the value of the sums owed to them.

The Relief party, however, had been overwhelmingly victorious in the state elections of 1817: a law was passed by the legislature chartering fifty-nine new banks with an additional immense issue of banknotes. Panic was the result. A period of universal speculation on borrowed capital, the purchase of land at extravagant prices, the finest English clothes and Lexington coaches that cost a thousand dollars, were succeeded by the present complete disaster. The Bank of Kentucky, a source of pride and stability throughout the state, had been irreparably damaged; the two branches of the United States Bank, at Lexington and Louisville, forcing the redemption of the

local notes in specie, had, with the Philadelphia merchants, further reduced the available hard money; private note sharers who, only a little while before, were content with a margin of ten, or even five, percent, now demanded ninety-five percent profit for honoring the depreciated state paper.

All this, with a large emigration from the Commonwealth—the slave-owners moved into Mississippi and Louisiana, the laborers to Ohio and Indiana—James Sash had clearly foreseen and insistently announced. Well, it had killed him. Manoah Abel's mind turned to Jarrot Bensalem, married to James Sash's aunt, Flora. Jarrot, and Flora too, for that matter, had always disliked James, Manoah realized. Jarrot in particular embodied everything James Sash mistrusted. The antagonism of principles that had existed between them reached back to the moment of their first encounter. Jarrot was as bitterly Republican as James had been a rigid Federalist. Manoah recalled many scenes of disagreement in his father's house at Bardstown. Naturally, he had never cared for Jarrot Bensalem; now, inevitably, he hated and detested him. Jarrot, there was no other word for it, had murdered James.

A comparative triviality—it concerned the State Bank at Bardstown—had brought this about: James had denounced its establishment, with a hundred thousand dollars capital and the power to issue notes for almost three-quarters of that sum, in a town of six hundred inhabitants. Jarrot Bensalem, a director in the bank, replied with a public statement of its affairs; it was, he declared, better than solvent; its critics, Jarrot continued, its par-

ticular critic in Frankfort, a lawyer and member of a faction long ago discredited in Kentucky, venting their rancor upon an institution created to save the people of Kentucky from the intolerable burden of hard money, were less than secure. The Bardstown bank, Jarrot asserted, was prepared to add lead, or even steel, to its strong resources of paper. He repeated this, phrased in different and insupportable terms, to James before the court house; then, scarcely allowing any of James Sash's courageous reply, the evil of his words turned into a knife's glitter.

What, Manoah wondered, in consequence of this, would happen to Jarrot Bensalem. It was only four days since the murder, but already the law had taken its preliminary course. Jarrot was in the common jail, in a room with no opening but a trap cut through the ceiling, waiting without bail trial before the Circuit Court. He had been immediately taken into custody by the sheriff, John Bartlett, and presented to two magistrates, who ordered him held. Manoah had heard, further, that the sheriff would be directed to summon a jury at once—political weight had moved the trial forward to the first week in July. Jarrot Bensalem was valuable to his cause; he was greatly, with great reason, feared; it was hoped by his supporters that he would not only be freed by the court, but that Governor Slaughter could be brought to remove the political disabilities placed on him by his engagement in what, optimistically, the Relief party called a duel.

There was a chance, Manoah knew, that Jarrot Bensalem would be liberated; just then the calmness and impartiality of the law was threatened and distracted by

the financial crisis and the bitterness of party spirit. Yes, it was possible Jarrot would be released. What then, Manoah Abel wondered, must happen. He didn't know. He couldn't think. He would face that, he told himself, when it arose.

Manoah's thoughts shifted again to the consideration of Nancy and their coming marriage. It had been fixed for October, and he speculated about that. Would Nancy, now, want to marry him sooner or put the wedding off until next year, when it might more resemble the happy occasion she had planned. In either case what an incredibly fortunate man he was, first to have owned the long affection of James Sash and then gain the love of his daughter. He adored Nancy in no tepid manner. When she was a little girl, staying in Bardstown while her father was away with military expeditions, Manoah realized, he had loved her. He had not known it then; he was too full of his own excellence and prospects at the bar to consider any serious attachment to a girl; but when he came to live with the Sashes in Frankfort, when suddenly—almost overnight—he realized that Nancy was grown up, his adoration for her swept everything else from his mind. He had told her this in words more impetuously honest than adroit, and, without hesitation, blindingly sweet, she accepted his love and him.

He would have to make large adjustments in his legal affairs. He would, without doubt, be appointed executor of James Sash's estate; he would continue to occupy the law rooms, keep on with the practice, James had shared with him. Fortunately, where they were concerned, the present financial difficulty was not serious. James and he had had one of the best practices in the state; there was

enough money to safely carry Liza Sash and her children, and Nancy, into better times.

The moon was high now; it fell brilliantly white through a side window into his room and made the garden at once clear and mysterious, at the same time bright and unreal. After supper Nancy had gone up to her stepmother's room; she would not, she had explained, see him again that night. Then she had kissed him. Usually he kissed her; she accepted his acts of affection; but since the death of her father Nancy had changed—she had grown more demonstrative and deeply tender. That elevated him to an almost unbearable happiness: her beauty and warmth, he thought, were too much for any man to experience.

She was, it was everywhere admitted, lovely-looking. Nancy was not tall, she was slender with a cool shining mass of hair and clear blue-gray eyes; the eyes, James had always said, of his grandmother, Sarah McKee Abel. She was at once gay in spirit and grave; in spite of her youth, Nancy's love of parties and dancing, the admiration that always surrounded her, she owned the curious quiet determination, the fixed allegiance to certain inner principles and necessities, that had dignified her father. There she was changeless.

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THE morning following the funeral a small group of the men of James Sash's family entered Manoah's law chambers on Broadway: Beriah Mace, James's uncle by marriage, from Harrodsburg; Pearce Salkead, who had

married Louanna Abel and lived in Lexington; Luke Sympson, wedded to Manoah's sister Kate; Pitt McAfee, the brother of Cora McAfee, James's first wife; and Green Mayhew, in the upper house from Nelson county, who had married Felicity, Bruton Abel's youngest daughter. Pearce Salkead, a tall bony man with red hair stained and dappled with gray, closed the door that shut them all into Manoah's inner consulting room. Beriah Mace, Manoah thought, seemed ill; his sagging fat was clearly a burden to him. Luke Sympson, small and compactly built, was invested in both his black Sunday clothes and solemn Sunday manner. Pitt McAfee, younger than any of the others—he was scarcely twenty—noted for his physical power and destructive temper, walked restlessly about the small interior. Green Mayhew was, as usual, urbane in manner and fastidiously dressed. He, too, was a young man.

"I might as well as another speak for the family," Beriah Mace proceeded; "I'm older than any of the rest. I knew James longest. By God, there wasn't no such man to be found in the rest of Kentucky. He always stopped with us riding through Harrodsburg. But you couldn't bring James to call it anything but Harrodstown. The old ways set hard on him. I mind the day he carried his new wife home to Frankfort from Bardstown and Nancy with her. One of the traces broke, and me and Thomas Lafoe helped to mend it. He had Liza wrapped up in his military cape and nobody could bring a word out of her. All you could see was a pair of big scared eyes.

"I go away back of that, too; when I was setting up with his Aunt Kate; when James was a little boy of twelve

or thereabouts. He took a great fancy to John Abel's wife Laure. Her that John fetched from New Orleans. Old James called her the strange woman, and she were more than that. It wasn't long, though, before she was dead. I never spoke out a word of that. Not to this day." Pitt McAfee harshly interrupted him. "What's that got to do with why we're here?" he demanded. "We don't want to hear a lot of family history. Mr. Mayhew, you talk to Mr. Abel." Green Mayhew addressed Manoah.

"It's about Jarrot Bensalem, of course," he said. "I heard yesterday, from a very reliable source—Jacob Swigert had it direct from Francis P. Blair—that it would be very difficult to convict Bensalem. I understand his supporters have already reached the Governor counting on him being released. They need him right away in this campaign for state offices." Pearce Salkead put in, "They will never have him if I stand alive." Mayhew continued, "That, my dear Manoah, is why we are present. What, in other words, is to be done about Mr. Bensalem if the court lets loose of him?" Pitt was still aggressively troubled. "Hell, no!" he exclaimed; "come down to the right of it. Who is going to kill the weevilly bastard. That's all and it's everything. I'll tell you this much for me—he's only alive now because he's in jail. I'd cut him into bloody keepsakes could I have reached him."

"That is it," Beriah Mace added; "only we want some dignity in the killing. We want to make it plain it's a family affair. It must be dignified with no slip up to it. You got to admit that Jarrot is hardy, and at the same time he'll suspect everybody who looks like an Abel from

now. We don't want another tragedy," Beriah Mace asserted. "Manoah," Green Mayhew continued, "you are familiar with me, you know I am ambitious, that I think well of what is ahead of me, well—if the responsibility and privilege of killing Jarrot Bensalem fell upon me if necessary I'd sacrifice everything I am and hope to be to do it. Before God." So would he, Luke Sympson said. "I'd kill him like you snap the head off a snake," Beriah Mace added. Pitt McAfee was even more emphatic. "I'm the youngest here," he declared; "there's no one depending on me and I'm not a state senator the way Mr. Mayhew is. I'm not a celebrated lawyer. Likely I'll never be nothing, so it's for me to put death on him."

Manoah Abel, seated at his desk, watched them all intently. Pearce Salkead was no less positive than the others. "If my family stood in my chance of doing it," he asserted, "I wouldn't have no family." The air was tense with the emotion, the determination, of the men around him. Manoah, strangely, was filled with a heavy sadness. It was all so useless now—James Sash had not been saved from the agony of his death, it would not end the tragic suffering and loneliness, the supreme loss, his death had brought about. At the same time he was seized by a fixed conviction. "All this is very moving," he said; "though it is what anyone who was a member of our family would expect. You understand, of course, that I am part of it. I am more than part—I saw Bensalem kill James. With a long broad knife. I have been closer to James Sash, through his later life, than any of you. I loved him more, if you will allow me to say it, than anyone else here. He was, in the way of spirit, my father.

If Jarrot Bensalem is freed I am the one who should meet him and settle, for all of us, with him. If justice is interrupted then I ought to be justice."

"What I got to know is can you," Pitt still persisted. "Are you able to do it? Like Mr. Mace said it will take a lot of doing. Are you hardy enough? I'll say here, in the family, I've killed two men, and there's a knack to it. Once you start you got to keep on." Manoah surveyed him coldly. "We don't doubt your ability," the older man explained; "there is no question of your courage or attachment to your own people; but, on account of that, it would not be advisable to allow you to act. One of us who is older, and with authority, must be selected. Green," he turned to his sister Felicity's husband, "you are only married to an Abel. I am Manoah Abel. I specially won't permit you to chance everything you have built up for my family." He rose and spoke in a tone of sharper authority. "You must leave this with me. To me. I believe I can be trusted." Beriah Mace addressed him in a solemn voice. "If this Bensalem escapes a sentence, then, you, Manoah Abel, give us your say that you will stamp out and kill Jarrot Bensalem with no more mercy than he dealt to James Sash. Except death comes to you."

"I believe I can be trusted," Manoah repeated. Pitt McAfee grasped his shoulder with an immense hand. "If he kills you," Pitt promised, "I'll set a slow fire to him." When they had gone Manoah's sensation of melancholy, of futility, increased. He wanted to hear James's voice again. He wanted to feel James's hand, and not Pitt McAfee's brutal grip, on his shoulder. Manoah would

have given anything to walk home once more through the sweetness of June with James Sash.

He had, now, very little interest in Jarrot Bensalem alive or dead. His hatred for Jarrot became an abstraction rather than a reality directed at an individual. He loathed all that Jarrot, an impersonal evil, represented. He hoped the process of the law would be successful, the murderer judicially executed. Not because he was afraid of Bensalem; or, rather, Manoah was not afraid of death: no, James would have infinitely preferred the other. He was, he saw, due in the Federal Court at once, but it was no more than across the way. Men on the street, and in the lower paved area of the court house, Manoah thought, looked at him with a questioning intentness. It seemed to him they were all wondering what his attitude was toward Jarrot Bensalem. Isaac Caldwell, the prosecuting attorney for Franklin county, joined him. "We must get a conviction," Caldwell asserted; "this time the law will have to be upheld. An immediate trial ought to help us too, Manoah; the outrage will be fresh in the jury's mind."

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Home from the office late—the heat had exceeded all probabilities and increased—Manoah discovered that Gabriel and Sarah McKee Sash were waiting for him to take them bathing in the river. It was then at its lowest; the broad flat rocks of the river bed were everywhere exposed; and, at the foot of the Sash lawn, there was a shallow almost still pool. Gabriel was dark and quiet, a

sensitive thoughtful child; but Sarah McKee was the reverse—round, her color bright, she was filled with a tireless energy, a loud and assertive confidence. Walking down through the garden, the children in their nightdresses, she swung with a surprising weight on Manoah's hand and chanted that she was going in the river. "I'm going in the river," she sang; "the river, river, river. I'm going in the river." Gabriel said that of course they were. "That is a silly song," he told her. They descended broad stone garden steps and entered an arbor of cinnamon roses.

It was always, at that time of year, sweet with the perfume of its flowers; but just then, Manoah thought, the fragrance of the roses was heavier than he ever remembered it before. The light of the declining sun lay in a golden radiance on the world, a tender lace of gold hung in the dusk of the arbor. It was a place apart from all the loud contentions, the conflicts, of life. He hated to leave it for the actuality, the brink, of impending doubtful events. Sarah McKee screamed happily when the water rose above her ankles; Gabriel moved steadily into the river pool with a determined serious expression. "Look, Gabriel," Manoah Abel announced, "Sarah McKee is wet all over already. She is a girl but she is wet first." Gabriel, in a doubtful voice, said he supposed she was a girl. "I don't have to hurry if I don't want to," he asserted. He lowered himself, gingerly, with tight lips, into the water. The sunlight faded from the trees on the opposite bank; the river grew darker. It didn't make a sound among its stones.

Manoah sat on a slope of grass where white violets

were still in bloom. For a moment the trouble enveloping, threatening, him fell away; he was folded in a profound peacefulness. There were light footsteps behind him—it was Nancy, in white, with Caroline, one of the children's nurses. "Sarah McKee," Caroline called, "Gabriel, it's time for you to come right out of that river. You got to be in bed." Gabriel was immediately obedient; he left the water with his nightdress plastered transparently on his thin fine body; Sarah McKee continued to enjoy her bath. "You mind what I tell you," Caroline cried at her; "always want too much of everything. I wouldn't be surprised if something would catch you right by the foot pretty soon now." Sarah McKee demanded sturdily, "What?" Never mind what, she was told. She was to come along quick.

The negro woman vanished with the children; the sound of their animated retreating voices lasted for a little on the air; and Nancy sat beside Manoah Abel. "What did you do today?" she inquired. "There was a decision in the Federal Court," he replied. "Favorable to me. Tunstall against the Frankfort Bridge Company." She hesitated, then spoke again. "Manoah," Nancy Sash went on, "when is the trial?" He told her that Jarrot Bensalem's trial was fixed for the sixth of July, two weeks off. "There can't be any doubt about it?" she asked. He was silent. Nancy turned and faced him. "Manoah, I said there couldn't be any doubt about it." Not if justice was satisfied, he told her. "But politics may come into it. The Relief party controls near everything now. In spite of the failure of their money. Bibb is against us and Francis Blair is working for Bensalem."

"If Mr. Bensalem goes free what will happen?" she demanded quietly.

The silence that followed her question was long and profound. Manoah stared fixedly out over the river. "Please answer me," Nancy insisted. "I don't know," Manoah admitted: "I don't know. We had better let that wait to see if it happens." She replied, "I have to ask this. I don't want to. I don't want to at all. If Mr. Bensalem gets off will—will our family do anything about it? I mean about Mr. Bensalem. Manoah, I have heard that question suggested. It wouldn't, with men like ours, be unlikely." He still evaded her. "I don't see how he can get off." That, she pointed out, did not answer her. "It isn't a proper question," he protested, "for you. Women must have nothing to do with such things. It is not becoming." The cold edge of a premonitory dread entered Manoah Abel. "Mostly you'd be right," she agreed. "This is special. It's special because it is about my father.

"Manoah, you almost told me what I was afraid of. What I hated to ask. You were closer to him than anyone else; he couldn't have loved you more; you would be the first to make Mr. Bensalem pay for what he did. Darling, if father had been different perhaps I would want you to kill Mr. Bensalem. Even if he did kill you. That isn't sensible but you see what I mean. If father were different. But you knew him too. You understand how he hated what was violent. My father wouldn't want any member of his family to shoot Mr. Bensalem on his account. If he could be alive he would not allow it." That, Manoah Abel told himself, was wholly true. Nancy put her arm around his; she pressed his arm into her warm body.

"You mustn't do it, Manoah," she said. "Promise me now you won't. All this must die with him. The way he'd want it to do. I can only explain this to you; I haven't a bit of influence with the rest; if they kill Mr. Bensalem it's dreadful but it can't be helped. I just want for you not to do it." In place of the dark river Manoah saw the men of the Abel family facing him in his law chamber; he heard again the solemn requiring voice of Beriah Mace and felt the weight of Pitt McAfee's hand on his shoulder. Green Mayhew spoke with dignity and courage. Luke Sympson, his brother-in-law, watched him with steady intent eyes. Pearce Salkead put his dependent family out of all consideration.

"I don't want to do it, Nancy," he proceeded; "I hate Jarrot Bensalem as much as anyone could, but I can't think of him individually. I can't believe it would do much good to kill him now. It won't put things back where they were. So happy. Nothing can accomplish that." Nancy put her arm around his neck. He could feel that there were tears on her cheeks; it was clear she was enormously relieved. Manoah gathered her closely to him, but an uncomfortable sense that he was lying to her possessed him. "That is exactly how I wanted you to feel," she said. "I have been so miserable, Manoah. Manoah, if you killed Mr. Bensalem I could never marry you. Not with father like he was. I can't explain it better than to tell you that. I wanted us, you and me, to bring peacefulness to father. He'll know about it, Manoah, in heaven."

Manoah Abel, wretched, began to argue with her. "You might be very wrong," he repeated. "This is a

thing you wouldn't understand. Men have to decide it and not a woman. There are some responsibilities we can't avoid no matter what they cost. James would have admitted that. He'd hate it, as you said, but he'd agree with me." The sound of frogs rose persistent and mournful along the river bank. The eastern sky faded through faint rose to a clear green. The earth darkened. "Sometimes," Manoah said, "there are obligations greater than any individual necessity. More than any man's hopes." He felt a shiver pass over her. Nancy freed herself from him and rose. "I don't like it here," she told him. "The frogs—." It was even closer, more magically sweet, in the arbor than before. Nancy wound her arms about him and drew herself up, a warm and distracting weight, upon his body. "You won't hurt us," she whispered; "father and me. We don't know what we would do without your help and love."

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It occurred to Manoah Abel that Nancy was like the rose arbor in the Sash garden. The session of the Circuit Court had just adjourned at noon, and he was gathering together the papers on the table before him. All three of the judges were sitting, Henry Daveridge and the associates, Nathaniel Richardson and Silas Noel. Daveridge stopped to speak to him; what he said was trivial; but it seemed to Manoah that the presiding judge tried to convey to him an expression of sympathy, the hint of a necessarily restrained support. Yes, Nancy was like the arbor of cinnamon roses—she held him with a perfumed

and warm beauty away from the senseless clamors, the universal discord, of the world outside their love. He stood with her—they were made one by their embrace—in a heavenly golden light. His thoughts, inevitably, returned again and again to what she had said on the bank of the Kentucky river. If it had been another girl, any girl, he reflected, he would have paid little attention to her. Nancy was different. She was different not only on account of her singular determination but because, too, of the depth of her love for her father. His death had made her feeling, her memories of him, hardly less than exalted.

In a way, Manoah realized, that was regrettable; it was a dangerous condition of mind. The dead were very often tyrannical. It was fortunate that his affection for James Sash was so complete; it allowed him to understand and sympathize with her. All this brought him again to the exact consideration of an insuperable difficulty—what, in the event Jarrot Bensalem was freed, would he do? When he addressed himself to the problem of a liberated Jarrot Bensalem he found that his attitude remained the same: he had no overwhelming desire to kill him. He could not feel that that would balance the scales of justice. He would far rather attack the principle, the present murderous existence, that made the menace of Bensalem possible. He would rather give his life to the removal of the law from the sphere of political influence. That attitude, Manoah realized, was part of the dignified heritage left to him by James Sash. The thoughts occupying his mind were James Sash's thoughts. That did not, however, dispose of his responsibility to the other men of his

family. He had not, specifically, given them his word that he would, if necessary, kill Jarrot Bensalem. He had said and repeated that he could be trusted.

Manoah Abel wondered if, secretly, he was afraid of Pitt McAfee and the rest; it might be that he dreaded public opinion; perhaps, at heart, he was no better than a moral coward. A moral coward was a man who sacrificed his beliefs for any consequent safety or profit whatever or to preserve the good opinion, the support, of the mob. That was a very ugly possibility. Manoah would not believe that it was so. His present situation, for one thing, was not so simple; it included far more than the mere assurance of his courage. There were abstract ideas, and Nancy, to consider. In a way, it seemed to Manoah Abel, the past was arrayed against a newer and different conception—the old harsh Mosaic law against the self-effacement of the New Testament.

He was in his law chambers with George Oakley, newly admitted to the bar of Franklin county, whom he had taken into his practice. Oakley sat motionless and attentive through the long period when Manoah Abel was lost in thought. "Ask Mr. Hardin to step in this afternoon," Manoah said at last. "Around three o'clock if possible. He is at the Love House. Tell him Mr. Crittenden and Robert Wickliffe will be present." They, men of position and political weight, had been close associates of James Sash's. Manoah, at least, was determined to move everything in his power to have Jarrot Bensalem legally executed. "The Relief party," Robert Wickliffe declared later, "in spite of the general depression and bank scandals, will own the next Legislature

and keep control of the Senate, and none of them wants Bensalem convicted. He is an important member of the party, a man always before the public, and it would be damaging to have him hanged. Aside from that, he is useful in the lower house. There is no doubt, if he gets off, they count on Slaughter acting in his favor.

"Damn it, they are going to have some trouble shoving more replevin laws down our throats. We might just as well admit, if that occurs, that a contract has no Constitutional guarantee whatever. What will happen? I'll tell you—there will be an immediate short stay on all executions for debt. No one able to collect a cut silver dollar. An attack on the branches of the United States Bank and on the Supreme Court. And, finally, everyone in Kentucky will be forced to accept worthless paper or give up hope of any payment at all. You heard Rowan at the bank meeting here in the spring; yes, and Sharp and Bibb and Barry and T. B. Monroe. General Allen made what they expect pretty plain." Hardin agreed with him. "All that and perhaps worse is ahead of us. Bensalem would be very useful to it. The only thing for us to do now, obviously, is watch the drawing of the jury." That, Crittenden said, he would attend to. "I am sorry John Bartlett is quitting the sheriff's office. I hardly know the new sheriff. I believe his name is White, Philip White. This system of summoning a jury for a specific case is a mistake. A general panel, with a scattered interest, would be better. More difficult to reach. Then, Manoah, to go back to Bensalem, there isn't a doubt the Relief party counts on him to intimidate the opposition. They depend on his reputation. A remark of Jarrot Bensalem's

was repeated to me only this morning—he said that when he left Virginia he carried an empty saddle bag to hold the ears of the men he killed."

A silence followed in which Manoah Abel again felt that he was the object of a deep voiceless curiosity. What, he was certain Crittenden and Wickliffe and Hardin were wondering, would he do if Bensalem were released. He had an impulse to cry out angrily at them that he didn't know. He left his law chambers early, anxious to escape to the serenity of the Sash garden and Nancy's love. Manoah was seated in his room, with his coat and waistcoat laid aside and his shirt loosened at the throat, drinking a tall glass of whisky, when there was a knock, at once firm and light, on the door. He rose and, to his tremendous surprise, admitted Nancy Sash. She had never before been in his room when he was there. She was a little flushed but wholly calm; deliberately she shut the door behind her. Manoah busied himself with his shirt and stock but Nancy interrupted him. "You mustn't bother," she said; "I specially want you to be comfortable, in a charming humor, now." She made Manoah sit down and then she brought a low chair to his side. Nancy sat with her elbows on his knee.

"This is very unbecoming conduct in a female," she admitted. "It is," he agreed. "I can't imagine what has made you suddenly so forward." It was his fault, Nancy replied. "You are so irresistible, Manoah," she continued, "you love me, don't you?" He kissed her. "You want to marry me." He kissed her again. It was a long kiss. He dragged her up close to him. When, at last, Nancy slipped back into her chair he was dizzy with his passionate

adoration for her. "Well, then," Nancy said presently, "I wish you would marry me. I want to marry you, Manoah, right away. Perhaps tomorrow. Or even today, if it isn't too late."

Manoah Abel suddenly avoided her widely opened blue-gray eyes. An insupportable desire for her swept over him pierced—like the metallic warning of a bell—by the sound of Jarrot Bensalem's name. He would not, however, he felt, consider Bensalem any longer. He could not consider himself except in connection with his love for Nancy. He had not said that he would kill Bensalem. His relation to the Sashes, his responsibility, was different from all others. His greatest obligation was to the will—it wasn't dead in Manoah—of James Sash. The iron-like clamor within him grew louder. It drowned out the voice of his immediate hope. His rapture was stilled. "Nancy," he said, "I can't do it yet. Not just now. I want to. More than I can ever tell you. You understand that, don't you, Nancy darling. Nancy, you understand that much."

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THE town, on the day that Jarrot Bensalem was found not guilty of murdering James Sash, was in a threatening state of political and individual excitement. The streets around the court house and the Capitol Square were filled with crowds of men and loud angry argument. Already, in fights, two men had been killed: one by shotgun wounds in George Gayle's tavern, a notorious resort; the other, an Anti-relief supporter, had his skull crushed by a stone an undiscovered person had flung. Frankfort

was full of men from the country, in butternut shirts, with linsey coats on their arms and wide brimmed dusty black hats. The handles of long knives were visible above belts; heavy pistols, in wide variety, were only half concealed. It was, on the whole, George Oakley told Manoah, a throng of Relief sympathizers. Jarrot Bensalem, after his release, had appeared on Broadway and there was a tremendous demonstration of approval. Bensalem had said a few words. Entirely political. It was clear that George Oakley was bothered.

Manoah realized that he had expected all he had just heard. He had, deep within him, known that Jarrot Bensalem would be freed. His contrary bearing had been active rather than secure. "I won't need you today," he told Oakley. "Perhaps you had better keep out of the way. Off the streets. It would be very easy for you, for anyone at all connected with me, to get in trouble. I don't want that. There is enough trouble now. Too much." Too much, he repeated wearily to himself. George Oakley left and Colonel Anthony Crockett came into the office. "I wanted to see were you alone," he said to Manoah; "you are and it isn't safe." He sat down with determination. Anthony Crockett—in spite of the fact that he was past sixty—had attached his affection and person to Manoah. He was one of the rapidly diminishing number of Revolutionary soldiers. He had fought at White Plains and at the Brandywine, at Monmouth and Saratoga and Germantown, Princeton and Trenton. He had, beyond the age of military service, fought with distinction in the War of 1812; and he was now Sergeant at Arms of the Kentucky Senate.

As he moved an exceptionally long revolver was plain under the skirt of his black coat. "I don't want to hinder you, Manoah; you got to have somebody responsible by you. With things like they are. Frankfort—Frankfort, hell, the whole state—has lost its wits. God damn it, I don't know what's come over Kentucky. When I reached here, after the English war, and settled on the Lawrenceburg road, it wasn't much better than the backwoods, and the Indians made things right disagreeable, but there was some sense to it. We didn't think then you could get something for nothing. Most everything went by trade, and a very good way it was too. A beaver skin was worth six shillings and an otter skin twice as much and more. Take James Wilkinson—there's nobody now in Kentucky his equal for trading. He controlled the fur market up to Fort Venango, he as good as owned the salt licks, and he sold tobacco personally to the Governor of Louisiana. James Wilkinson came damned near making this an independent country of his own. I mind the election for the Fourth Convention, in 1786, when he was a candidate; he wanted to break off from Virginia without any more bother; his views stirred up considerable of a fuss; but he was elected. There was an Abel, John Abel, along with him too. I recollect him because he had a good deal to relate about the lower Mississippi river and New Orleans."

Manoah Abel scarcely heard what the older man was saying; he was intent upon the fact that Jarrot Bensalem was free in Frankfort; Bensalem stayed, for the sessions of the Legislature, at the Philip Bush Tavern. His thoughts returned to Nancy. She had grown very silent, with-

drawn, Manoah realized. Her usual animation and color had fled; that, if anything, made her not less but more desirable. She was waiting, he knew, for him to come to her with the assurance that he would not kill Jarrot Bensalem. Waiting—it was the same thing—for him to ask her to marry him at once. Well, he told himself defiantly, he would ask her to marry him. That, their love for each other, was the only important thing in life. All the rest were abstract problems of conduct; they were immaterial compared with it.

Colonel Crockett lighted a long thin, a rattail, cigar. In spite of his years of struggle, of the hardships and perils of warfare, he was surprisingly serene. His dark face was scored with the exposure of long campaigns, his mouth a hard line stained yellow by tobacco juice, his gaze was as cold as Jarrot Bensalem's, yet his expression, his whole being, was engagingly tranquil. Manoah momentarily wondered about that. "I like things laid out in a plan of battle," Anthony Crockett proceeded; "the enemy drawn up there and your own forces here. Orderly. The good and the bad different. That's it, Manoah, different. It is all mixed up now. You don't know which is which. A member of your own family puts a knife in you.

"I have lived a long while and I've seen a little of most everything. Battles and death and women and power and gold. I've seen all that but only one thing you could depend on. Order," Colonel Anthony Crockett said again. "That is the same thing, to my mind, as decency. It takes some effort. You can't always be comfortable. You can't hardly ever be sober and happy at the same time. You

can't never be safe. Yet, Manoah, it's the only way you are safe. I mean then you can't disgrace yourself."

"You are talking about honor," Manoah Abel said shortly.

"That is a big word," Crockett objected; "you wouldn't use it to describe your own ideas."

There, of course, was the secret of Anthony Crockett's security—he had a fixed conception of decency. He had adhered to it. Decency or honor, the name didn't matter. You could not, possessing it, Crockett had insisted, be comfortable or safe or happy. Manoah moved to a window opening on Broadway and watched the somber passing stream of men. Clouds had come up and there was a patter of rain. The procession of faces was grim. Intent angry faces and the hard pressure of men's bodies. He wasn't, he assured himself again, afraid of them; but their solidarity, their primitive singleness of mind, overwhelmed him. Their feet made a continuous rhythmical sound.

Colonel Crockett, it seemed to Manoah, had expressed their simple inarticulate convictions! He had summed up all, in a world of men, that men most highly regarded. It was sustained by a species of bitter beauty. A masculine and human variety of self-effacement. James Sash had been different and yet James, too, had gone to war. He had fought with the English and killed them. But he could never, Manoah realized, make Nancy understand that. She would not, if he killed Jarrot Bensalem, marry him. That at last made his position clear—his reluctance to kill Bensalem came from his desire for her. His doubts and distractions, viewed in that light, were no better than

arguments for his happiness. But he couldn't, the truth was, be happy in that way. Manoah saw that, married to Nancy, his question would never be answered, his doubt never stilled. The Old Testament would forever contend in his mind with the New. The close surging men of Kentucky caught him in their march and carried him with them to their common ordeal.

He was, suddenly, entirely calm; all his confusion was changed into a hard simplicity of resolution. Manoah was seated at his desk, and he pulled forward a sheet of paper; he dipped his pen in ink. He put them both aside. There was nothing, after all, for him to write. Nothing that, in any eventuality, could be helped. Nancy, he thought, smiled into his eyes. The scent of cinnamon roses was plain about him. The rose arbor! He moved his chair back sharply and the legs made a disagreeable sound on the wood floor. Colonel Crockett gazed at him keenly. The afternoon was waning.

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THE rain stopped, the angry tide of men drained away from Frankfort, the afternoon became a space of still heat. Manoah Abel turned into St. Clair Street and made his way toward home. He walked neither fast nor slow, but reflectively, with his gaze fixed on the ground before him. He was, in spite of the lingering blaze of the sun, wholly dry; his hands, he thought, must be dusty. With a sudden illogical violence he wiped them on his handkerchief. The sensation of dryness was not dispelled. A voice addressed him in civil greeting; he didn't look up;

he made no effort to identify it. By God, Manoah told himself, there wasn't a drop of sweat to him. His lips were like paper. His hat, suddenly, seemed unbearably heavy; its rim cut into his forehead; and he took it off and carried it in his hand. He heard a bird singing in a tree over his head. Birds, animals, were fortunate—their lives were without the problems, the complications, of a state of civilization. A tight smile appeared for a moment at the word civilization. Civilization—the state of living in a peaceable manner with men. The law was another term that mocked him; a phrase he silently mocked. Things like that were only pretensions, the formal and hypocritical dressing of hideous naked facts.

He came to the gate of the Sash house, and his hand, resting on the latch, began to tremble; it shook so violently that it was incapable of any service. All his effort to control it, to stop the trembling, was useless. He stood gazing at his jerking fingers with an expression of deep surprise. It might almost have been no part of him, something entirely foreign that he had suddenly encountered. This stopped as abruptly as it had started. There were widespread trees on the Sash lawn; it was definitely cooler than the center of the town. The sod was vividly green in the shadow of the boughs. Bright and variegated patterns of flowers were partly in shade and part in sunlight. Manoah did not go into the house—he wanted to see things and not people; restful inanimate plants and an arbor of cinnamon roses. He stood for a long while in the rose arbor. It was filled with the sound of bees. Waves of fragrant sweetness passed over him. The sun cast a tender veil of gold through the roseleaves. I must go into

the house, Manoah said to himself; soon supper will be ready. Nancy would expect him. Nancy, he repeated, will be waiting for me.

She was in the large formal room on the left of the lower hall. Nancy, seductively pale in black, without ornament, her arms and neck bare, was enveloped in a weary insuperable sweetness. She looked up at him and smiled. "You'll be late with your bath," she said. Instead of obeying the implication of her speech, going up to prepare for supper, he sat in a chair across the floor from her. "We heard that the court let Mr. Bensalem go," she told him. He made no reply to that, and she didn't pursue it further. "You know, Manoah," she proceeded, "I don't approve of you working so hard. Not in weather like this. It can't, even with all you have to do now, be necessary. You ought to go to Blue Lick Springs. We might all go. Liza and you and me and the children. I think I can persuade Liza. It would do her as much good as you. For a month. Not a day less. Manoah, is there anything you want to say to me?" She meant, he realized, to ask if he was prepared to marry her. He looked at Nancy with a troubled face. He didn't answer.

She tried—the effort was obvious—to be light, cheerful in manner. "You won't do anything for me," she went on; "even take a bath." He thought seriously about that. It would be better to go at once. The tub was in a small enclosure on the second floor. It had a tap for cold water, hot water had to be carried from below, and the fresh shock after all the heat of the day largely revived him. Manoah Abel wanted to linger in his room, dress slowly, but there wasn't time. Not a moment to lose. He

put on immaculate white linen and brushed his long hair back from his cheeks. He gazed at himself curiously in a mirror, and said aloud, "Manoah Abel." Nancy was still on the sofa in the big drawingroom. He sat beside her, now, his arm on the sofa back, almost touching her. Her appalling candor and tenderness returned.

"I love you so much, Manoah," she said. "I love you so much it's wicked. I try not to think of you when I'm in church, but I do. If I wake up unexpectedly at night you are in my mind the instant I wake. When I'm falling asleep you are there. I wonder all day what you are doing. Where you are—if you are in your law chambers or at court and which court. I want to hear you argue your cases. But not more than other things. I'd just as lief hear you ordering dinner at a tavern. I suppose that's wrong. It isn't serious. Manoah, darling, the things serious for women are different from those men think are. The way your hair falls across your forehead seems to me terribly serious. I believe that made me be in love with you. Just your hair on your forehead. I expect you will laugh at me."

He didn't laugh. God, no, Manoah said to himself. He looked at her with a desperately longing gaze. "Don't stop," Manoah told her; "not this once. Keep on." He glanced quickly at his watch. "There was some trouble or other in the kitchen," she explained; "with the stove. I'm sorry I hurried you. Are you hungry?" No, Manoah Abel said, he wasn't hungry. "What was I saying?" she continued; "oh, yes, that being in love with you made me bad, Manoah. Aren't you upset about that. About making me bad. I don't care for anything or anybody else. Not

one damn bit." He had never heard her swear before. It at once delighted him, flattered him, and made him infinitely sad. "I don't want to go anywhere, do anything, that doesn't bring me to you. I can't bear to have people come into the house—when it isn't you. That is wicked." Her voice, he recognized, had grown more rapid; her face was as pale as possible; Nancy was looking at him intently. She rose and stood before him. Before Manoah could prevent it she was on her knees with her head and arms resting upon him. Her face was hidden. Manoah bent over until his cheek rested against her bowed head. An unendurable suffering constricted his heart.

Her hands slipped around his knees and she clung to him with a desperate and surprising force. Before that, the day James was killed, he had knelt and held her close to him. It was useless. He could not, Manoah felt, allow her present misconception and hope, her attitude of humility, to continue. He raised Nancy gently to her feet. She stood very close to Manoah gazing at him with a set and frightened stare. Her terror, he saw, increased. She pronounced his name in a choked tone of infinite dismay. She grew remote and still. Manoah reached out his hands toward her—she was far beyond his touch, forever beyond the appeal of his voice. "You have killed my father again," she said finally. A dignity of pride, while Manoah Abel watched her, came to Nancy's assistance. She turned and proceeded stiffly to the long mirror in a gilded frame between the windows on Wilkinson Street. There she rearranged the slight disorder of her hair. A negro servant stood in the doorway, and, impossibly commonplace, Manoah said, "I think supper must be ready."

Nancy's eyes were dark, faint new lines were drawn at the corners of her mouth. "If supper is ready," she repeated in a voice without color, "why then of course we must go to supper." She went slowly out of the drawingroom and he followed. In the beginning dusk her hair seemed gray. Manoah had an instant vision of her grown old. Nancy old and lonely. By God, he wouldn't allow that! His rebellion was lifeless. Liza Sash, her face haggard from grief, already stood beside the table. Manoah Abel, now the head of their family, said a grace. "Lord, we ask you to forgive us, remitting our sins. In the name of Christ, the Savior." There was a deep blue bowl of clear soup with an aroma of wine before Liza Sash, a dark Kentucky ham before Manoah, a wide bowl of summer greens and jellies. A maid brought in hot breads. The servant who had announced dinner appeared from the hall. Mr. Philip White and two—two gentlemen were outside and would like to see Mr. Manoah. The servant pronounced the word gentlemen with hesitation and scorn. Manoah Abel quickly rose. "I must beg you to excuse me from supper," he said to Liza Sash. He did not dare to look at Nancy.

THE DINNER table at Calydon was even longer, there were more places filled, than customary. Thomas Hazel sat at its head, an enormously fat man in brown Holland linen with a smooth-shaven, flushed and amiable face; Angela, his wife, almost hidden by the silver soup tureen, occupied the end opposite to him. Their eldest son, Archelaus, was at her right; his sister, Liddy, married to Gabriel Sash, came next; and his wife Charlotte was across the table, beside Bland Hazel, two years younger than his brother Archelaus. Bland was unmarried and Eliza Rose McGlassen—she had been Eliza Rose Sash and was Gabriel's sister—sat farther up the table. Gabriel Sash, gazing at her, thought again of Thomas Hazel's extraordinary good heart. This was September; Eliza Rose had come to stay at Calydon last April; and there was still no

mention of her going away. Gabriel had, more than once, suggested it was time she left for the News in Woodford county—their sister Sarah had married Henry New—but Thomas Hazel wouldn't hear of it. Eliza Rose must stay with them for Christmas anyhow. Gabriel was sitting between Felicity Mayhew, Manoah Abel's sister, and his wife Susan. In addition, there were present Rust Hazel, Thomas's brother from Nelson county, with his wife, Manoah Abel, and four or five neighbors—Gabriel felt that he could not be certain about their number.

All this, it was evident, Thomas Hazel found to be very pleasant; he urged everyone, in tones of imperious generosity, to eat and, particularly, to drink more; the men returned to their silver cups of whisky and water, the women temperately sipped the Madeira in glasses of Irish crystal. Yes, Gabriel repeated to himself, Thomas Hazel was the soul of liberality; a kinder man he could not imagine. Archelaus Hazel was scarcely less admirable: he resembled his father in everything but appearance: Archelaus was small and delicately made. A figure, actually, in all but size, of striking beauty. His brother Bland was handsome, too; but, Gabriel felt, in a less engaging manner—Bland was long and slim, and dressed in the greatest care, with the inviting gray eyes of a woman and a mouth like the thin scar of a riding whip. Bland was usually polite, but his politeness had little of the warm simplicity characteristic of his father and brother. He sat, as usual, beside his mother—she would have him nowhere else—and most of the time her hand rested on his.

A political discussion was in progress, and, because of

this, during it, Gabriel Sash was acutely and privately uncomfortable. His position was difficult. He was, quite aside, he trusted, from the fact that he had married Liddy Hazel, the manager of Calydon, her father's farm; or, rather, of his series of farms; but politically and personally he was opposed to the Hazel conceptions. Gabriel Sash was a Whig, that was he supported Henry Clay; his father, James Sash, had been a Whig, an early friend and partisan of Henry Clay's; and before that his family had been almost wholly delivered to Federal ideas. The Hazels were Democrats; they were, by hard conviction, antagonistic to all that Clay and the Whigs represented; leaders in the forces in Bourbon county organized to make James K. Polk president of the United States. Thomas Hazel was speaking.

"No one can say," he asserted, "that I was unfavorable to emancipation. Didn't I belong to that damned Colonizing Society in Lexington! I gave five hundred dollars to send the free niggers, and any other niggers they could get in the boats, off to Africa. But that was before the Abolitionists began to attack us. By God, I won't be robbed by Garrison or James Birney either. I won't let Cassius Clay tell me what to do with my own property. The Constitution is still in force. I'll add this, too, if all the niggers on Calydon were free they would be back in their cabins in a week. They are happier here, and a lot safer, than on the streets of Lexington and Frankfort."

That, Gabriel Sash recognized, was true. The slaves at Calydon were well treated and contented. They were, for the most part, well treated throughout Kentucky. He was fundamentally against a system that made slaves of men;

yet, if it continued to be necessary, he was willing to live with slavery in the United States; the actual danger did not lie with him and the reasonable southern Whigs, but with the Democrats—it had lately become evident that they would not live anywhere without slaves. The Democrats, even Thomas Hazel, had grown bitterly determined about that. Gabriel did, however, agree with their hatred of the Abolition party. The underground railroad, a senseless and melodramatic organization, had ended perhaps for fifty years any hope of voluntary emancipation in Kentucky. Practically every Kentuckian he knew, of every political belief, had been in favor of freeing the slaves until the lawless operations across the Ohio river had driven them into a concerted and rebellious opposition.

"I said all that to Cash Clay last week," Bland Hazel continued his father's remarks; "it was in Paris. He was talking about the moral degradation of the negro, and I told him his friends in the North were responsible for it. I give you my word he had his hand on his knife. If he had drawn it there would have been one white nigger less." Manoah Abel said Cash Clay was a dangerous nuisance. "I don't feel like that about Henry," he proceeded. "Damn it, Thomas, if this business is not settled it will be fatal. Say in a generation or two. Gabriel Sash and myself are in a difficult position—we don't believe in slavery, we want it ended, but we want to dispose of our own property. We want justice. We really belong to two parties, the Whigs and the southern Democrats."

"You do," Thomas Hazel agreed; "you're spread over the whole political scene. A man can't say yes and no at

the same time. You will have to come over to us, Manoah. Stand with your own state. I keep telling Gabriel that, but he can only think of the past; he doesn't know what is around him; Gabriel thinks this election lies between George Washington and Thomas Jefferson."

There was a general not unkind appreciation of this. Gabriel Sash was silent. Manoah, he considered, had spoken for both of them. Archelaus Hazel said there had been too much politics discussed. He turned to his father. "When I was in Frankfort yesterday at least a dozen men asked me when we were going to race Hymettus against Nicodemus Hammerty's mare." Thomas Hazel's red face grew redder. He banged the table with his fist. "If this keeps up," he almost shouted, "I'll go out to the stable and shoot Hymettus. I've said in Frankfort and Paris and Lexington and Louisville that I will not race against a damned slave dealer. Racing is still a sport for gentlemen at Calydon." Bland thought he was wrong. "We believe we have the fastest horse at two mile heats in this part of Kentucky and Hammerty thinks his mare is faster. The fact that Hammerty sells niggers has nothing to do with it. He's a very decent man, and treats his blacks properly, as a matter of fact. Anyhow, you will either have to race him or take Hymettus off the track. It's done the Calydon stables a lot of harm already."

"Very well," Thomas Hazel replied in a congested voice; "if that is so I'll sell the Calydon stables. It seems I am not only likely to lose my niggers—the riffraff will soon race my horses." Archelaus laughed. This, he said, was worse than the other. "I must say I think Bland is right. It would be democratic, father, to match

Hammerty's mare." Democracy, Thomas Hazel declared, could be damned. He belonged to the Democratic party; that was politics; but where Calydon and his stables were concerned he proposed to be as Whiggish as it was possible. "That," he addressed Gabriel Sash, "is why I made you manager here. It's why I let you marry Liddy. Thoroughbred horses and women are aristocratic properties, Gabriel; feed 'em Federal oats."

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With dinner at an end Gabriel Sash walked through the high hall of Calydon to the front door and went out upon the lawn. There was a small half circle of Kentucky marble, with three shallow steps, at the entrance, but no other porch, and, Gabriel knew, it was Thomas Hazel's intention to add a portico with impressive Greek columns. This he was prepared to regret; not because he particularly admired the plain brick façade and limestone rangework; he was attached, as Thomas Hazel had asserted, to the past of Kentucky. It was in his blood. From where he stood meadows swept down to the Paris turnpike and Cane Run, a wide pastoral reach marked by a regular pattern of whitewashed fences and filled, burnished in the afternoon sun, with slow grazing Red Devon cattle. He could see, at the right, the long low line of the Calydon stables, the green turn of the track; but at the back of the house the primitive forest advanced practically unbroken to the slaves' dwellings, the outbuildings and the orchards; and there, perhaps there only, Gabriel was wholly contented.

The forest was magnificent with tulip poplars and walnut and black ash trees, with Kentucky coffee bean trees and beeches. They rose splendid and straight into the air fifty, sixty, feet before a limb broke their ascent; the ground under the trees was for the most part level and covered all year with brown leaves. Occasional ravines were impenetrable with canebrakes, innumerable springs the pure and bubbling sources of streams bright with silver schools of fish.

Gabriel loved his wife honorably and with devotion; he had a deep paternal affection for his children—for Belvard, who was eight and the eldest, Camilla and Robert Wickliffe, in his fifth year; but his feeling for the forest, for its silence broken only by the scolding of squirrels and the thin sweet cries of birds, was more moving than any of the material sentiments and domestic attachments of civilization. He had little or no time for its relief; his duties at Calydon began at dawn and were hardly ended by dark; but he did manage to occasionally linger in the seclusion of the woods. Wrapped in its mysterious influences. He often had, there, a strange and reprehensible impulse—he wanted to go deeper and deeper into the wild and never return; not even to Liddy and the children and to the kindness of Thomas Hazel.

It was in his mind now to walk back to the region of the forest, but Archelaus Hazel appeared and made that impossible. "Manoah was right," Archelaus said; "at times it must be hard for you here, Gabriel. The truth is Bland doesn't make it any easier. I do all I can; but I have Greenland to keep up; and my father, who is as near perfect as a man can be, simply won't be approached

with small considerations. I don't know how we would get along without you." Gabriel Sash was obviously uncomfortable. "It sounds ungrateful," he proceeded, "and Liddy hates the idea, but I have arranged to buy a place in Woodford county. Near my sister Sarah's. Soon, Archelaus. I spoke to you before about this. I practically have the money. I'll have to borrow a little but not much. I want my own land. I want to rear my children on it." He remembered, Archelaus admitted, that Gabriel had explained to him about this. He could not, in reality, blame him. His speech was interrupted by the appearance, on horseback, of a young man with a dark face and uncommonly long black hair. He wore leather riding breeches and a well-fitted green coat with deep skirts and silver buttons, a wide felt hat. He rode, Gabriel saw, extraordinarily well and swung to the ground with grace and assurance.

"You," he said at once to Gabriel Sash, "are Gabriel Sash. I have never seen you before but I knew you at once. You see, I can recognize my own family." Yes, Gabriel replied with reserve, yes? "I am Fauche Brimage," the younger man told him. Yes, Gabriel Sash said again. Fauche Brimage showed no trace of discouragement or hesitation. "My great grandfather was John Abel and he was your great grandfather's brother. I can't guess what that makes us but it's something. The same blood. I have been in Texas," Fauche swept on; "I went with Lamar's expedition to Santa Fé. You know about that. When it failed Salazar marched us in irons to Mexico City. Twelve hundred miles. A lot of our men dropped dead and a lot were murdered, shot, by the guards. I was kept in prison

for a year, then Santa Anna let me out, but I was too sick to travel. I started back for New Orleans, where I have always lived, when suddenly I wanted to see Kentucky and my father's kin."

"What was your great grandmother's name?" Gabriel asked.

"Her name was Laure. John Abel married her in New Orleans. It was about the time James Wilkinson first appeared in Louisiana." Archelaus spoke hospitably. "I'm Archelaus Hazel," he explained; "Gabriel married my sister Liddy. They are living with us just now, and, while you are in Kentucky, we would like you to do that too." He was staying at Mr. Holman's tavern on the hill, in Frankfort, Fauche Brimage told them. "I called on Judge Abel, he was away with Mrs. Abel, but I saw Mrs. Flora Bensalem at the Mansion House." A marked constraint settled upon Gabriel and Archelaus Hazel. "Of course," Brimage added rapidly, "I had forgotten all about that—it was Mr. Bensalem who killed your father in a duel," he said to Gabriel Sash. Archelaus replied, "We do not refer to the affair between Mr. Sash and Mr. Bensalem as a duel, Mr. Brimage. We prefer to call it an assassination." A momentary awkwardness was brought to a close by the general appearance of people from the house.

Gabriel admitted to himself that Fauche Brimage made him uneasy; his reason for this was both clear and reasonable—Thomas Hazel had insisted on Brimage leaving the tavern at Frankfort for Calydon, and the Hazels had already done far too much for his family. He could not, however, get anyone to agree with him. Fauche Brimage

was well liked at once: his stories of Texas battles and high spirits pleased Thomas Hazel; Mrs. Hazel approved of his formal and romantic manner; Bland was enthusiastic about his marked skill with horses; Liddy and Eliza Rose McGlassen, Gabriel's sister, both thought Fauche Brimage was the handsomest man they had ever beheld. Eliza Rose's husband was dead; she was twenty-six or twenty-seven years old, Gabriel didn't know which; and he thought her attitude toward men, especially where Brimage was concerned, was obvious. She was different, he recognized, from all the other Sashes and Abels he knew of. Her eyes were blue, but not the steady gray-blue of the McKee tradition; they were big and soft, the color of slightly faded blue velvet. Her hair was light—it almost required to be called gold—but, again, it was different from the light Abel hair, a lightness that held a cool suggestion of silver. She resembled, more than anything else, her mother, who had broken the solemn vows of the Lorettine nuns to marry James Sash.

Some of this occupied Gabriel's mind in the office where he administered the affairs of Calydon. It was at the end of the left wing of the house, with an independent door and steps leading down to the sod. Fauche Brimage was seated opposite him and speaking. "I want to stay in Kentucky," he declared; "right here in Bourbon county. With Thomas Hazel, as a matter of fact. And I can't keep on like this. You have pointed that out to me. I would like to work with the horses. I mean ride them. I'm as good as Mr. Hazel could find. He realizes that and so does Bland. I said something about this to Bland, and he's in favor of it. He is in favor of me. The

truth is I'm pretty well liked at Calydon. Bland, I know, spoke to his father. Anyhow, Mr. Hazel told me I'd have to come to you. You're the manager here."

All that Brimage had said, Gabriel knew, was so; he was very much enjoyed at Calydon; his courage and ability with horses might well be useful; Bland, who had immediate charge of the stables and racing, wanted him. Gabriel didn't want him; he had no reason for what, probably, was no better than a prejudice; but he could not overcome it. "I have nothing to do with this," he at last said abruptly; "I am leaving Calydon soon; Mr. Hazel and Bland must decide. They seem to have decided it."

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Liddy Sash, like her brother Archelaus, was small; she was not thirty and appeared to be less than twenty; her eyes were brown; her hair was brown, the color of the leaves on the forest floor; and her father's flushed countenance was, in her, softened to an exact rose. She had, Gabriel suspected, a good mind; but, in the interest of more valuable feminine attributes, she concealed it behind her charming youngness. Gabriel was in his room at Calydon with her, a great square chamber with a distant ceiling and incredibly high windows and doors. An inner door led to the three rooms occupied by their children and two nurses. The children had gone to bed, and Gabriel, untroubled for the moment by affairs other than his own, was comfortably serious. "I'll be planting my own hemp by next spring," he informed Liddy; "yes, and barley and rye. We'll grow tobacco for a money

crop. It will be a novelty in Woodford county, but there is no reason why it can't succeed. I'm going to start with fifty head of yearling cattle and a good horse or two. There won't be much racing for a while. We can't afford that, Liddy. Not yet. God, it will be wonderful! Independence. I hate other people's things. Even their generosity. You are nothing except in yourself. I have a curious feeling about Kentucky. About its soil. I want to own a part of it. I'm a Kentuckian."

"I don't see why you have to be so disagreeable about it," Liddy replied cheerfully. "You ought to take all that for granted. Father has been marvelous to us." He had, Gabriel agreed. "But I don't enjoy it. Liddy, we have almost ten thousand dollars now. Perhaps we have ten. We can buy the Debruler place any time. It's only sixteen thousand and it will be easy to carry the balance. Henry New will arrange it." Liddy interrupted him. "Gabriel," she asked, "have you noticed Eliza Rose and Fauche Brimage?" He glanced sharply at her, annoyed at the departure from the subject of his discourse. "Yes," he replied finally, reluctantly, "I have. Fauche Brimage is another thing I will be glad to get away from. Eliza Rose has always been ridiculous about men. It doesn't mean much to her." This time, she said, he was wrong. "Eliza Rose is madly in love. A woman can tell. At first she was too nice to Fauche; just like you said; but now, when anyone is around, she is positively indifferent. But she never takes her eyes off him. It's Fauche that specially interests me. I like him enormously—any woman would—but I am not sure of him. After all, Eliza Rose is your sister and you ought to look after her."

"She'll have to look after herself," Gabriel replied. "I have more than I can manage already. You will see, she's able to do it. There is something in her, I can't tell you what, it's not a Sash trait, that brings her through very shady places. Or perhaps it leads her into them. I can't tell. If she didn't belong to my family I am certain I'd dislike Eliza Rose. Why did you interrupt me about her?" Liddy didn't know why. "She just came into my head. I suppose I'm romantic and interested in love. If it's love. And then, Gabriel, you know I don't like to talk about going away from Calydon. It isn't very tender of you, Gabriel, to make me." It wasn't tender, he agreed. "Liddy, I've got to do it. If we stay here I'll be ruined. Your father's kindness would kill whatever is in me. You ought to see that. I don't want to be another Hazel. I'm a Sash. Gabriel Sash. I have to be free. Have a Calydon of my own. I don't care if it's only a log house." She made a grimace. "You are not thinking very much about the children and me."

"I have to think of us all together," he explained; "I wouldn't be much good if you were discontented; you'd soon get sick of me if I was unhappy. It can't hurt you to go with me; have a place of our own; and it would hurt me to stay here. You know how your mother feels, too. Now Archelaus has Greenland she wants all the rest for Bland. The truth is she resents my managing Calydon. Bland isn't married, so he has no children, and it annoys her to hear our children call Calydon their home. I've said nothing about this before, Liddy, but your mother and Bland have helped to make it hard for me. Archelaus understands it." Liddy sighed. "It's natural that mother

prefers Bland to the rest of us," she asserted; "he is so captivating. Archelaus and you are serious: you are always busy with cattle and planting crops; and, since he married Charlotte Brown, Archelaus has been too solemn for expression. Bland is different—he is always racing and doing exciting things. Bland is dangerous and women even when they are mothers adore that."

There was a light firm knock on the door to the hall, and Mrs. Hazel entered. "Gabriel," she said in a rapid cold voice. "I am glad you haven't retired. I think you ought to go downstairs. Mr. Nicodemus Hammerty is there and I can tell by the sound of his voice that Mr. Hazel is excited. Mr. Hazel and Bland are both hot-headed, but you haven't any temper, and you may be useful to restrain them." Liddy exclaimed, "Why, mother, I never heard of such a thing! Gabriel has a perfectly frightful temper. It's in his family. They have killed I don't know how many men." Mrs. Hazel paid no attention to her daughter. "You would oblige me," she said to Gabriel Sash.

He found Thomas Hazel and Bland with Nicodemus Hammerty in the formal chamber that opened with double doors into the diningroom. Thomas Hazel's face was scarlet and Hammerty was notably hot in color and attitude. He was a big and powerful, a rough-appearing, man; but Gabriel knew that, aside from his offensive occupation, Hammerty's fairness and courage were everywhere admitted. Bland was equable and persuasive. "I'm glad you appeared," he said to Gabriel. "You are supposed to have some influence with my father. Mr. Hammerty came to Calydon on a very rea-

sonable errand, I think." Hammerty turned his back squarely on Bland Hazel and addressed Gabriel. "It's this, Mr. Sash," he proceeded; "you know there is a lot of talk about my mare Nigeria and Mr. Hazel's Hymettus. The whole center of Kentucky is interested; some people think Hymettus is better and others like the mare; naturally they want to find out who is right. I don't want to force Mr. Hazel into a race, but it's a question with me if the public ain't doing exactly that.

"I know Mr. Hazel has confidence in Hymettus; he's not holding back because of that; we all understand why he is; and I am here this evening to tell him it's a small reason. There is no better blood in Kentucky than the Herod strain. What does it matter what I do? I'm not racing with Mr. Hazel. The mare would be running against Hymettus, and I say she has every right to. I came out here alone to say it." Thomas Hazel protested heatedly. "You seem to be completely lost to the obligations of hospitality. You are quite safe at Calydon." Hammerty agreed with him. "I agree with you. I have been in worse places than this and come out on my feet. Mr. Sash, I love my mare; I love her more than any other living soul; and I want all the honors I can get for her. She's the best there is and I want her to meet the best." Nicodemus Hammerty desperately mopped his brow with a tremendous Bombay handkerchief.

Thomas Hazel rose. "By God!" he exclaimed, "that is an honorable sentiment! It would be noble on the lips of an emperor or from the humblest of his slaves. It would move me spoken by black or by white. Mr. Hammerty, I will match Hymettus against your mare. At the

Franklin Agricultural Society Fair in October. The best two mile heats agreeable to the rules of the Capital course. For any purse you may mention. Any amount, Mr. Hammerty." In the excitement of his decision Thomas Hazel grasped Hammerty's hand. "You to mention the sum, Mr. Hazel," Nicodemus Hammerty insisted. "Five thousand dollars," Thomas Hazel replied; "a purse of ten thousand and two thousand dollars forfeit money." Gabriel Sash said that ten thousand dollars was a very large amount. He was not listened to. This, Hammerty asserted, would be the greatest race of the age. Of, in fact, all time. He would have wagered everything he possessed on Nigeria.

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Gabriel Sash, a steward of the Franklin Racing Association, was mounted and occupied a place of advantage at the race between Hymettus and Nicodemus Hammerty's mare. He had taken a stand at the distance pole, where he commanded a clear view of the stretch and the Ladies' Pavilion. The warning trumpet had blown, and Hymettus, led by Bland Hazel, with Fauche Brimage, in the Calydon silk, beside him, was closely followed by Nigeria, Nicodemus Hammerty and his jockey, Dunn Salyers, a ratlike boy in green and orange. The Ladies' Pavilion was brilliantly filled with color and movement, the ground about the track thronged with all varieties of men—modes of the first fashion, the human refuse of the surrounding towns, grim-jawed individuals from the mountains, and a rough loud horde of country men. It

was the custom, at the Capital course, to race with the left hand next to the pole; and Hymettus, Gabriel saw, had the inside station for the first heat. Nigeria was wide of him, to the right: it was evidently Dunn Salyer's intention to run in a straight line for the lead.

The drum tap sounded and the start was handsomely even. Nigeria took the lead. At the end of the first quarter-mile—they were around the first turn—she was three lengths ahead. The horse and mare entered the back side of the course—a straight run to the half-mile pole—making a terrific pace. At the turn Hymettus, under Fauche's whip and spurs, came up to Nigeria's shoulder, and locked they swept down the stretch. Nigeria was running steadily under a hard pull. She raced like that, Gabriel Sash knew; the mare had unconquerable bottom; at two mile heats she could be counted on to race the whole distance at practically her utmost speed. Hymettus, however, was best in his run, a short incredibly fast burst. Gabriel's attention was caught by Fauche Brimage—his right hand, engaged with the whip, was away from the bridle, and, his arm high in air and his body thrown forward, his seat was loose and unsteady. Nigeria drew ahead at the three-quarter pole, she held her position and won the first heat in three minutes and forty-one seconds. Hymettus was less than a length behind.

There was a hurried consultation between the Hazels, Thomas and Bland, Fauche Brimage and Gabriel Sash in the interval before the next heat. Hymettus, Fauche declared, was not relieving himself properly. He seemed cold-blooded to Fauche Brimage. He thought Hymettus was a little filleted. Gabriel could find no sign of swelling

in the horse's loins. "Hold yourself steady and let him go," Thomas Hazel directed Brimage. Nigeria had the rail at the start of the second heat, but Hymettus got away with a rush that carried him inside the mare at the first turn. Through the back stretch Hymettus was three lengths in the lead; he increased his lead to four; and that, Gabriel recognized, was his best and final effort. Gabriel Sash trotted quickly up to the three-quarter pole. Nigeria was slowly but steadily coming up on the Calydon horse. She was scarcely more than two lengths behind. A length and a half. A bare length. Hymettus won the second heat in three minutes and forty seconds flat with Nigeria at his throatlatch.

That was better, Thomas Hazel declared, standing beside Hymettus, stripped at his rubbing place. "Damn it, I'm not certain," Bland contradicted him. "The horse has lost his spirit. He died at the second turn. Everyone knows that's not like Hymettus." Fauche Brimage repeated his opinion that Hymettus was cold-blooded. Thomas Hazel informed Fauche that he was a fool. "It's possible we kept him too long at grass," Gabriel Sash suggested. "We worked him actually less than three weeks." Bland, in turn, resented that implied doubt. The Calydon stables, the question of racing, he sharply pointed out, was his affair. "You carried Hymettus off his feet this last first quarter," he told Fauche Brimage. A negro appeared running and breathing heavily. "Mr. Sash," he managed to say, "you better come right away and see Potentate."

Calydon Copper Potentate was the Red Devon bull that was head of Gabriel Sash's exhibit at the Franklin

Agricultural Society Fair; he was the most valuable animal in Gabriel's charge; and he instantly neglected all details of the race. "What is the matter with Potentate?" he demanded. The negro didn't know. The bull had just naturally fallen down and was swelling out, the black messenger said, like a toad. Gabriel turned his horse toward the cattle show and rode, where it was possible, at a hand gallop. Calydon Copper Potentate was a grotesque and terrible sight. His barrel was so swollen that his legs looked like small ineffectual sticks. "Take my horse and find Doctor Driskill," he told the man in charge of the Calydon cattle. "He is watching the race in his carriage beside the Ladies' Pavilion. Tell him he will have to hurry. It's bloat." Gabriel was helpless to relieve the bull. He couldn't think why it took Driskill so long to appear. Calydon Copper Potentate was the best bull in that part of Kentucky.

The sheds of the cattle exhibit were practically empty of men: everyone had gone to watch the race between Hymettus and Nigeria. There was a curious muffled sound, like the explosion of a paper bag, the bull was seized by an agonized convulsion, and Doctor Driskill arrived. "He is dead," he said laconically. "The diaphragm burst." He could see that, Gabriel replied. "The race killed him." Driskill hotly combatted that opinion. "I came the minute your man found me. There wasn't any race to see. Nigeria left Hymettus in the back reach and won by almost half the stretch."

Supper, at Calydon, was a somber occasion. Thomas Hazel couldn't for the life of him think what had come over Hymettus. "I knew he wasn't right after the first

heat," Fauche Brimage insisted. "If you'll remember I spoke of it then. He ran like a tired horse all the way. To be honest I didn't think we'd win a heat. It took all the riding I know to bring him in once ahead of Hammerty's mare." Bland Hazel was sullenly quiet. Angela Hazel and Eliza Rose McGlassen left the table; almost at once Fauche rose and followed them. "How much altogether did we bet on Hymettus?" Thomas Hazel asked his son. "I mean aside from the purse." Bland replied that they had staked ten thousand dollars. "All with Nicodemus Hammerty's brother, Hood," he added. Thomas Hazel was obviously surprised. "I didn't think Hood Hammerty could get together a tenth of that," he commented. "Hood represented a pool," Bland explained. "He didn't say whose money it was. It was posted at the Lexington Bank."

"Add another three, perhaps four, thousand dollars for the death of Calydon Copper Potentate," Thomas Hazel said. He fell into a silent figuring, and then turned to Gabriel Sash. "I'll have to let Marshall have the Davy Fork farm," he went on. "I hate that worse than hell, but it's the only way we can get so much money right now. We haven't sold off an acre of Calydon since Ament Hazel settled here in 1790."

It had been a disastrous day, Gabriel realized, with an unseasonable heat. Outside, the lawn and gardens, the meadows, were dim under the stars; he wanted to be alone, to walk, perhaps, to the edge of the forest, where the night was untroubled by prize cattle and racing; and without warning he came up to Eliza Rose and Fauche Brimage standing in a close embrace. They did not see

him, and Gabriel made an embarrassed sound in his throat. Eliza Rose spoke first. "You might as well know," she said to him; "they all might as well know," Eliza Rose added to Fauche: "We are going to be married." Gabriel Sash was obscurely relieved. They suited each other, he considered, perfectly. "I hope you will be happy and prosperous," he said stupidly. "If you have any plans, if I can help you, let me know." They had immediate plans, Fauche Brimage replied; Gabriel, however, could not help them; they intended to be married at once and remove to Louisiana.

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Gabriel Sash discussed that announcement at length with Liddy in their room. "I was relieved when they told me," he admitted: "and I'll say right now you knew it all along. That will save you the trouble of reminding me you did. You know, too, what I think of Eliza Rose; I haven't said much about Fauche; but I don't like him any better. I'm glad they are going away. But, Liddy, that is queer. I thought I knew pretty well what Brimage had. He brought almost no money at all to Kentucky, and, outside his bets, he gets very little except his living here. He must have lost money, if anything, on the race with Nigeria; what Eliza Rose has Manoah Abel put in trust. She can't draw it out when she pleases." Liddy owned small interest in these practical details. "I wonder how they'll get along," she proceeded. "I don't think I'd want Fauche for a husband. I believe you would be better, Gabriel. Even with all those disgusting details about the

bull's death. But, still, a truly romantic man, like Fauche Brimage, would make up for a good deal. The name would be something—Mrs. Fauche Brimage. You will admit it's different from Gabriel Sash."

He said, thank God, that it was. "I saw Henry New today," he continued; "he assures me we can buy the Debruler place for fourteen thousand dollars down. Henry can let me have four thousand himself. At last, Liddy." She surprised him by being, for the first time, sympathetic about a place of their own. "I'm glad you'll get it, Gabriel," she admitted. "You have been wonderfully patient. I even made mother agree you had done well with Calydon. It will be good for me, too. I'll have my own negroes and what I want for dinner. I know just how we will furnish the house: there will be long mirrors in gilt and plum colored curtains and elegant rosewood sofas with horsehair covers. I am certain father will give us Melinda and Nellie. The children simply could not get along with other nurses. Then, you see, he will have to let us have Robert, because we could never separate Nellie from her husband."

All that, he admitted, would probably happen. He added violently, "I don't want any of them, Robert or Nellie or Melinda. I warn you now I'll set them free the instant I can afford to. When I'm able to afford it," he continued gloomily. "Your father won't face it but this damned question of slavery is tearing up Kentucky. It's tearing up the United States. Negroes are no good here. We don't make cotton and so we don't need slaves. I would do better hiring the few hands I want for planting. It isn't sensible to be responsible for fifteen or twenty

useless men and women and God above knows how many children. We are responsible for the negroes. Mrs. Hazel is always taking care of them and so will you be. Carrying food out when they are sick and listening to their nonsense. I'll say this too—I don't like a society where you have to own slaves to be called a gentleman. I'm not a Democrat, I'm a Whig, but I'm a Kentucky Whig, and we've never been brought up here on any kind of slavery."

"Why, Gabriel," Liddy protested, shocked; "what a dreadful thing to say. I'm just glad nobody else heard it. We have to own slaves; they belong to us and I don't mind belonging to them a bit. I love Melindy and Nellie. Nothing would make me turn them away." There were tears in her wide brown eyes. "If Cash Clay or the North tries to take them from me I'll kill him. Them." She was standing, rigid with defiance. He replied wearily, "I know you would. So would your father and Bland and Archelaus and Henry New. Almost all the gentlemen, the Democrats, we know. That's another reason I'll be glad to move away from Calydon. It will get worse instead of better." He could not, Liddy asserted quietly, get away from her. "I won't change, Gabriel, and so you will have to. You can't fail us, father and me and the children and our negroes. I suppose this is politics; I'm not expected to discuss it with you; I never have before; now I must. I must, Gabriel."

He was, he recognized, in a painfully serious position: the question of slavery had inevitably made its way into his domestic existence. He would never be able to change Liddy; he could never make her see what was in his

mind. The tears had vanished from her face; she was pale and composed. "When I can," he repeated, "I will manumit my slaves. I will do everything in my power, up to losing my part in the country, to make Kentucky free them when it, too, can afford it." Bending over Gabriel kissed his wife's forehead. It was, he thought, cold and white like marble. "You keep saying you are a Kentuckian," she said slowly; "it's a funny kind. I don't believe many of us would recognize it. Not to hear you talk. And I don't know what you mean by your part in the country. Calydon is your country, and Woodford county. The North isn't anything to us. How could it be! Look what the North is like now—stealing all our negroes over the river. Calling us I don't know what. I hope we will leave them out in the cold and have a country of our own." Her voice grew even slower. "If we do I could never live with a man who didn't support us. Not even if it was you, Gabriel."

"We can be certain that won't happen," he told her, in an attempted cheerfulness. "Even Boston wouldn't try to break up the Union." Liddy returned to her customary purely feminine mood. "I can't think why you wanted to talk about politics," she said, engagingly unreasonable. "Fauche and Eliza Rose are far more interesting. I asked Eliza Rose and she said they loved each other the second their eyes met. The very second, Gabriel. Isn't that stirring. I'm trying to forget about the fearful amount Hymettus cost us. It was really Bland's fault—he bet a great deal more with Mr. Hood Hammerty than father realized. Of course father wouldn't say anything about that. I'm sorry Fauche was riding.

It must have been hideous for him. It was such a setback coming when it did. Right after he planned to announce his engagement. I'm sorry mother was so disagreeable about it, Gabriel, since Fauche is your cousin. I was really very cross with her. She believes there are people who think Fauche Brimage didn't do his best with Hymettus. But mother was just mad."

Gabriel Sash was silent; he was mentally reviewing all he had seen of the race between Hymettus and Nigeria; he was once more engaged with the mystery of Fauche's sudden capability of marriage and of distant travel. However, he resolutely dismissed all that from his mind. He didn't like Fauche Brimage, but this, after all, was entirely a personal attitude. He had no reason in the world to believe Fauche was actually dishonest. Liddy's mother was simply spiteful about everything that touched him. "I don't doubt but your mother thinks I killed Calydon Copper Potentate," he told his wife. She giggled. "She is ridiculous," Liddy admitted. "I'm anxious to see Bland run Calydon; not only the stables but the crops and all the animals. Mother will want us back soon as that begins."

Archelaus, Gabriel was informed, was below and would like to see him. "This is the devil about the Davy Fork farm," Archelaus said at once. "If we begin selling land God knows where Bland will end. With mother behind him. I told father we'd let him have the money he lost on this cursed race but he won't listen to me. He said he would not allow the Browns to hold his pride up. Damn it, Charlotte isn't a Brown now. She's my wife. Charlotte is a Hazel. I suppose the farm

will have to go?" Yes, Gabriel Sash replied, it would. "Calydon hasn't a dollar profit in the banks this fall. I'll have to get a new thoroughbred bull, too. The truth is, Archelaus, without this last loss the stables kept us in sight of debt all the time. They take three-quarters of everything I can make on Calydon."

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THE morning following Gabriel Sash left for Cincinnati, where it was his design to purchase another Red Devon bull; Robert, Nellie's husband, drove him to Frankfort; there he took the steamboat John Armstrong and, at the mouth of the Kentucky river, changed to a palatial boat on the Ohio. When he returned almost a week later, Liddy met him at Calydon with an eager excitement. "The most amazing things have happened!" she exclaimed. "To begin with Eliza Rose and Fauche are married. They were married at Lexington the morning after the race and never let on. We only heard about it yesterday, and, Gabriel, they are leaving for New Orleans at once. Doesn't it take your breath away! Did you get a bull?" Yes, Gabriel replied, he had been successful. At, however, an extravagant price. "Why do you suppose Brimage and Eliza Rose kept their marriage a secret?" he asked, stripping off his travel-stained clothes. "No one can imagine," Liddy replied. "It is all terribly strange. Gabriel, they have had their bags packed for days. There is more, too—Clara, she's that light pretty girl taking care of Eliza Rose—told Melinda he is simply horrible to her." Just who, Gabriel Sash demanded, was horrible

to who. Liddy begged him not to be completely dense. "Why Fauche Brimage, of course. Clara says Eliza Rose is crying most of the time. What do you make out of that?"

He could make nothing of it, Gabriel admitted. It was, even allowing for the emotional exaggeration of women, all very odd. He could see no reason for the privacy of Fauche's marriage to his sister. No one, God knew, wanted to interrupt it. Trouble seemed to have descended on them with a remarkable haste. Gabriel spoke with a brief propriety to Fauche Brimage about his marriage. He hastily kissed Eliza Rose and explained that Liddy and himself would give her money. A sudden cheerfulness possessed Eliza Rose at that information. She thanked Gabriel profusely. "I understand you want to go south," he concluded; "I will have it for you soon as possible. Tomorrow evening anyhow."

There was, very early of the next day, a message for him from Manoah Abel. If Mr. Sash found it convenient Mr. Abel would be grateful for his company in Mr. Abel's law rooms at Frankfort that afternoon at three o'clock. Gabriel was puzzled. It was awkward for him to leave Calydon; but, he recognized, it could not be avoided; Manoah Abel's note was as decided as it was civil; and, in consequence of this, a little before three o'clock he walked up St. Clair Street, past Mrs. Watson's boarding house, to Manoah's chambers. Gabriel had a peculiar attachment for Manoah Abel: when he was a child Manoah had lived with them on Wilkinson Street in Frankfort; he had been James Sash's partner at law; and, when Jarrot Bensalem killed Gabriel's father with a knife, it was Manoah who

repaid that dark indebtedness on Bensalem's body for all time.

Because of that Gabriel was surprised to find Flora Bensalem, Jarrot's widow, with Manoah Abel. "I am in a difficult situation," Manoah said at once; "the truth is, Gabriel, we are both in a fix. I don't yet see a way out of it. I have had to do some rapid thinking. It's about your cousin, Fauche Brimage, and, I expect, Thomas Hazel." Gabriel Sash sat down quietly. A heavy sense of disaster gathered about him. He gazed absent-mindedly at Flora Bensalem. She was an old woman. More than seventy. Well preserved, with a dry flush of color in her cheeks and a malicious vital mouth. Manoah Abel fastened the outside door. "I want you to hear what Mrs. Bensalem told me yesterday," he addressed Gabriel Sash. "It promises to be very painful." Flora Bensalem began quickly, in a voice trembling with age and emotion.

"When young Brimage first arrived here he called on me at once. He was very well-mannered and I liked him. I liked him because he hadn't much to say for the Sash men and he didn't like any of the Hazels. You know all that and you know why. Fauche Brimage thought Gabriel here was a dry stick. He stopped to see me when he was in Frankfort and had time and took a glass of whisky and water and told me what a nuisance it was at Calydon. He didn't mention Eliza Rose Sash. Then, about three weeks ago, he said he had something very important to explain. It was about a race between Hymettus and Mr. Nicodemus Hammerty's mare Nigeria. He said Hymettus couldn't win. No one except himself and one other man knew that for a certainty, he told me, and they were

going to make a heap of money. Fauche asked me if I had any and would I trust it with him. If I gave him five thousand dollars he would bring back ten and divide the winnings with me.

"I asked him how he knew Hymettus wouldn't win and he just laughed. He said he was afraid Hymettus could not keep up the pace Nigeria would set him. I am not altogether a fool and I wanted to know how Fauche would place the money. He couldn't very well bet against his own stable and the horse he was riding. He didn't want to tell me that and so I refused to give him anything. I was considering it, but not because I wanted to make money—I told you I hated the Sashes; I've hated them for over fifty years; I was fixing to do what I could to bring contempt on them. I understood what Fauche Brimage meant. I didn't let on to him but I did. I wasn't born in Kentucky for nothing where horses and racing, yes, and men, are concerned.

"Well, he went away without telling me—I wanted some hold on him—but he came back. Fauche came back the next day and said the other man was Hood Hammerty. I took five thousand dollars out of the little capital I have and gave it to him. He promised to bring it all back the day after the race. That is why I came to Mr. Abel. He didn't. Instead he got married. I haven't seen him since then. I am afraid, now, I will never get my money." Tears of mortification, of wretched anger, wet her cheeks. "What will happen to me with that much gone?" she asked querulously. "I'm an old woman and lonely. There is nobody now to provide for me. I'm an Abel, by right of birth, and a helpless old woman, and

yet you all let anyone come up from Louisiana and rob me." Gabriel Sash answered her.

"You haven't been robbed yet," he pointed out. "Go home and say nothing about this. You are quite safe. The money will be returned to you." When she had gone, folded in a black silk shawl worked with a diagonal plaque of pale roses, Manoah Abel said that, to his mind, Gabriel had accepted a senseless responsibility. "Hell, the old woman was willing to disgrace you. Don't be a fool, Gabriel." Gabriel Sash spoke with a careful formality. "Fauche arranged with Hood Hammerty to pull up Hymettus and let Nigeria win. Mrs. Bensalem made that clear; now I can see it myself. From the race. We have always, excepting Brimage, been honorable men," he said; "we have never, until now, robbed old women and taken advantage of the people who benefitted us."

"What does that mean?" Manoah demanded. "Are you going to present Flora Bensalem with five thousand dollars and pay all the Hazel losses?" It would not, Gabriel Sash trusted, be so serious. "Nicodemus Hammerty is an honest man. When he hears this, especially with his mare, with Nigeria, involved, he will get a full account from Hood. I'll undertake to improve Fauche Brimage's conception of property. That, outside the purse, will pretty well account for Thomas Hazel's interest. It ought to cover everything else—Hood Hammerty bet ten thousand dollars with Bland, and Fauche got half of that from Mrs. Bensalem." Families, Manoah Abel said, were strange. "There is a tradition trouble always comes to us from the south. I don't know when, back in the Kentucky woods, it began; I always intended to ask Beriah Mace—

he married old James Abel's daughter, Kate—but I neglected to and he died. It has the look now of being truer than ever for all of us who are opposed to slavery."

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Gabriel Sash rode back to Calydon inattentive to the sure-footed gait of his horse; his head was sunk and the bridle loose in his hand. The confidence that had supported him in Manoah's law chambers gradually deserted him. Dusk flooded the wood pastures and gathered more darkly in the woods. A white mist followed the streams, and the moon rose full over the eastern highland. All that, only a little while before, he had dismissed with such certainty, now seemed infinitely questionable. Life was too complicated for the simple procedure he had explained to Manoah Abel. Events promised to be too unwieldy for his disposal. The darkness, diluted and transparent in the moonlight, fell. It grew colder. There was a pungent smell of burning leaves, an edge of frost, in the air. A light was burning at the entrance to the dwelling at Calydon; a negro appeared and took his horse. Supper was over, but there was food for him at an end of the dinner table; food and a decanter of Bourbon whisky in the light of a candelabra. Liddy, he had found, was confined to bed by some minor ailment, and, to Gabriel's great relief, he was alone. The negro waiting on him had vanished on soundless feet; the diningroom was full of dense swinging shadows. Shadows like heavy velvet draperies. He must see Fauche Brimage at once, he realized. There ought to be no one else present. At that

moment, infinitely increasing the difficulty of his position, Eliza Rose Brimage and her husband entered, evidently in search of him.

"It's splendid to have you back," Fauche said, with a pleasant show of cordiality. "Calydon always seems incomplete when you are away. Gabriel, Eliza Rose told me what you were going to give her, more or less, and I think it's extremely generous of you. More than that, you were very good to realize we needed all the money we could get right away. For the trip to Louisiana. Thomas Hazel has given us a horse, and we hope to leave tomorrow, early, and drive to Louisville. Then we'd do better on the River." Gabriel thought, they expect me to give them a wedding present. A wave of anger at Fauche's effrontery, at Eliza Rose's patent avarice, swept over him. Damn it, his sister was married to Brimage; it was better for her to hear the truth before she was more deeply committed to him. Gabriel Sash said precisely:

"I am surprised to learn you want more money. I got a very different impression in Frankfort today." What, Fauche Brimage demanded, did he mean. "The fact is," Gabriel continued, "I understand you have so much that you are going to give Mrs. Bensalem five thousand dollars."

"What does Gabriel mean, Fauche?" Eliza Rose demanded. "Why would you give Mrs. Bensalem anything? She is nothing to us." On the other hand, Gabriel proceeded, Fauche Brimage was a great deal to Mrs. Bensalem. Just then. "Before you leave tomorrow," he directed Brimage, "you must stop and pay what you owe her."

Fauche Brimage leaned across the table and poured a stiff measure of whisky into Gabriel's empty water goblet. He drank it and laughed. "It's the hell of a shame," he said in a high voice; "I meant to do that. I had the best intentions in the world about her. Unfortunately they have come to nothing. I was forced to trust Hood Hammerty with the money and he has gone off with it. Hood took all of it to some other place."

There could be no doubt about the truth of what Fauche Brimage said. "I didn't think of that," Gabriel admitted stupidly. "I did," Brimage replied. "It couldn't be provided against. I had to trust him." Gabriel asked, "Have you any idea where he went?" Fauche Brimage answered that he hadn't. "He didn't confide in me." Fauche's tone changed, it grew sharper. Demanding. "Now you know what happened. There is no good going over the details. You may supply them to suit yourself. I haven't got fifty dollars, I'm married to your sister, and you'll admit we ought to get away. I don't believe you will be interested in keeping us." Gabriel turned to Eliza Rose. "You must know what this means," he said decisively. "Fauche sold out the race between Hymettus and Nigeria. He sold out Thomas Hazel, and I don't need to explain what that means to me. He sold me out, after he got here through us. Now, naturally, he wants to get away, but he can't force you to go with him. No court on earth would make you stay married to Fauche Brimage. I don't know how to get a divorce, I don't know anyone who has had one, but Manoah Abel will be able to arrange it for you."

Eliza Rose Brimage went up to her husband and put a

bare arm around his neck. "You make me sick," she told Gabriel. "I'm glad to have a chance, at last, to say that. I've been wanting to for years. I wouldn't dream of leaving Fauche because he tried to get some money out of Thomas Hazel. We did intend to pay Mrs. Bensalem back, but Hood Hammerty made that impossible. If you want to hear more I rather admire Hood. Fauche did everything, faced all the music, and Hood Hammerty got the money. I hope he enjoys it."

"What I can't realize," Gabriel Sash said, amazed, "is that you are a Sash. James Sash's daughter." Eliza Rose cried at him that she was tired of that, too. "I've heard too much about James Sash, even if he was my father. I'm anxious to live him down. I don't want any of his virtues. I don't want yours." Fauche Brimage, interrupting her, told her to shut up. "We are not interested in that," he asserted. "All we care for now is how Gabriel feels about his wedding present. Is he going to give us enough to take us away tomorrow and down the River to New Orleans?" Gabriel Sash gazed at Brimage steadily; a possibility far different from any sum of money possessed him—the impulse to kill Fauche with the blunt pistol then in his pocket. He no longer felt any necessity to consider Eliza Rose. The desire to shoot the metallic young man standing beyond the table was extraordinarily strong. His provocation, Gabriel felt, was enormous. His hand dropped softly, unobserved, to his pocket. Eliza Rose, at last, became uneasy.

"It would be best to give us some money and let us go," she told Gabriel in a voice not wholly steady. She drew Fauche Brimage closer to her; Eliza Rose stood

half between him and her brother. Brimage shoved her roughly away. "Don't hang around my neck," he said irritably; "you are not exactly a wreath of flowers. Well," he demanded, returning to Gabriel, "what are you going to do for us?" Gabriel Sash sighed. The pressure inside his head decreased; his body relaxed. "Make you a present," he replied. "You will be able to leave for New Orleans in the morning." There had been nothing else, Gabriel Sash told himself, to do. Not, especially, in the face of what Eliza Rose showed herself to be. That continued to shock him. He was outside, on the moonlit lawn, and, involuntarily, he walked past the house and back into the forest.

It was, except for the momentary sleepy sound of a bird, peacefully still. Patches of moonlight hung in the darkness like bright transparent leaves. He sat on the fallen trunk of a tree. Moss and lichen. An old tree out of the past in Kentucky.

Fifteen thousand dollars, he said to himself. I will have to borrow a good half of it. He must pay it all back—ten thousand dollars to Thomas Hazel and five thousand dollars for Flora Bensalem. It was a necessity made imperative by what he was. Manoah Abel, when he saw that, would assist him to conceal the source of the money. Nicodemus Hammerty's honesty, his pride in Nigeria, could be counted on. He would not, now, have a place, any earth, of his own for another long term of years. Liddy, since they must continue at Calydon, would be more relieved than not. Like her father she was wholly impractical about money. The influences of the forest crept into his being, dissipating the troubles of his

existence. The forest had an especial assuaging magic for him. He ought to be weighed down with disappointment. He wasn't. Nothing that had happened to him seemed to have any importance.

The only actuality was a fixed necessity to be free. It didn't matter what freedom cost. He would never, Gabriel Sash recognized at last, be bound like Thomas Hazel by any possession of land. The forest, he dimly realized, where it concerned him, was a state of spirit. In some way he could not clearly grasp it was a place of memory. It enveloped him like a charming and powerful memory and stilled his concerned heart. The forest cooled the fever in his mind. Names faded from his consciousness and people retreated from his knowledge. The past, he thought, moved around him on silent and adroit moccasins. Catawba Indians from the south and the French Indians from beyond the Ohio river. Solitary pioneers and settlers and surveyors. The Long Hunters. Soldiers from the French and Indian Wars and from the Revolution. Oh God, let me go back to the old time, he breathed, rising. It was in vain. He was fixed between the inalterable accidents of birth and of death. Gabriel Sash returned on adroit and secure feet to Calydon and his several responsibilities.

VI

On the third anniversary of the death of her husband, Manoah Abel, Susan Abel put on a white dress. She was preparing for the evening—it was an excessively hot day at the end of July—and the cool white India muslin was an enormous relief after the quantities of black clothes she had worn. The change, so soon after Manoah's death, must, she realized, cause a great deal of comment in Frankfort; all the women of her husband's numerous family and connections would resent it; but they would keep the comments, the resentment, to themselves; she would never hear them. That was partly because of her character—Susan did not encourage the familiarity of advice; and part because she was not a Kentuckian. She had been Susan Cutts, from New York City; Manoah met her in Washington, where, at that time, her father

was a United States Senator. If she had been a Kentuckian, she knew, in all probability, she would never have laid aside the marks of a deepest mourning. Kentucky women were like that—they owned an indissoluble attachment, at once sentimental and passionate, for the men they married. Indeed, it was the custom to refer to the women who survived their marriages as the relics of the masculine deceased.

A faint smile appeared for a moment on Susan Abel's face. A maid was on her knees, at Susan's back, settling her skirt; a second slave stood patiently with details of Susan's dress: a Chinese silver paper fan on a carved ebony stick, a minute square of Binche lace and a black enamelled vinaigrette. Yes, she told herself, the Kentucky women made miraculous wives; but, then, the men of Kentucky were equally splendid husbands. Manoah, as a husband, had been almost faultless; he was both tender and considerate, invariably patient with her, and decided. There had been nothing negative about Manoah Abel. Quite the reverse. He was so positive that, more often than not, she had been concerned about the possibilities of his temper and acts. He had killed one man, Jarrot Bensalem; and, in spite of his asserted hatred of any violence, she had felt that provocation might easily produce other victims. She watched with a painful intensity for this trait—rather it was a tradition—in their son Elisha.

Susan Abel moved over to a long mirror; she did not trust negroes with even so slight an affair as a skirt. She had married Manoah in 1831, and they had gone directly to Frankfort; it was now 1861; and after thirty years she

still disliked black servants. The truth was, she recognized, that she didn't do well with them. She was too stiff, too formal, too particular. It was necessary, she had discovered, to treat negroes with a direct interest and affection, and both, in that quarter, were impossible for her. Frankfort, compared with New York, was very simple and informal. Kentucky had been extremely generous, amiable with her; yet, now, she considered that her life here had not been a complete success. Its main engagement, her marriage, was extremely happy; at the same time she had never felt entirely at home.

In addition, her money created a difficulty in a society where money had very little reality. It wasn't, in Frankfort, regarded as an overwhelming fact; its power and influence were not obvious: the opportunities it created simply made a barrier between her and more narrowly limited individuals. The simplicity of Manoah's air where her great richness was concerned had been remarkable—he had regarded it with the honest and unaffected pleasure of a child. Her daughter Delia, who had married Robert Folkes and lived in Philadelphia, owned little of her father's simple charm. Delia, privately, was elaborate and cold. She had, Susan Abel thought, all the hard and unattractive qualities of the Cutts family. I used to be like that, she told herself, leaving the mirror. Her marriage, to the degree that she was capable of change, had changed her. A difficulty, however, existed all through her relationship with Manoah—she could never cure the impression that he was, at heart, actually childlike. Most women, she knew, enormously admired that quality in men they loved. Well, she didn't. There her hardness was

apparent. She had, in consequence, felt slightly superior to Manoah. She didn't want to be superior to him; she wasn't, she told herself countless times; but that attitude —always, thank God, successfully concealed—remained faintly to harass her.

It came to this, generally, that people in the North were, perhaps fundamentally, different from the people of the South. The South was sustained by another tradition, local to itself. Provincial, Susan considered. It thought, she continued, with its heart; but then there was more than a chance, no better than the other, that in the North feeling was confined to the head. That, just now, was a very important realization, with a war beginning between the Union and the Confederacy. It was especially valuable, she thought, to Kentucky. Kentucky, lying between the two warring sections, owned the qualities, the necessities, of both; and, at any price, it must remain neutral. Her marriage to Manoah Abel was an example of what she meant—Elisha Cutts Abel, the result of that, belonged both to the North and South. She found Elisha waiting for her in the little drawingroom below.

"Mother!" he exclaimed; "it's simply marvelous to see you in white again. What a surprise. If I had known it nothing could have taken me out. I told Mason Hazel I would go to Greenland for supper." She studied him with a sharp repressed anxiety. Elisha was not—anyone could see that—strong. He was too thin. His cheeks were too hollow. He had pale hair, carefully brushed on a shapely head, the gray-blue eyes of his father, and a sensitive, colorless mouth. At the same time his voice, like his convictions, was strong; he had, his mother insisted,

an unconquerable spirit. "I am glad you are going to the Hazels," she told him. "It's splendid for you to be with a lot of young people. I must have them here very soon. I think we are both too serious."

A quick shadow, a darkening frown, gathered on his features. "We can't help that," he pointed out. "It's a dreadfully serious time. John Hazel and Callam, and he's only sixteen, have joined Captain Morgan's company. With Mason that makes all three of them in the Lexington Rifles. Belvard Sash belongs to the Union Home Guards, and Wickliffe, his brother, is going right in the Confederate army. That puts me in a pretty poor light, with half my family for state's rights and the other half enlisted against them." She answered quickly and severely. "It does nothing of the kind. You are exactly right. Mr. Crittenden told you what he thought. Even Mr. John Breckenridge agreed with him. Kentucky will be neutral, Elisha; you will be far more useful if you stay neutral too. I detest all this enlisting and talk about arming Kentucky. You must not be carried away by it." He said, "I wonder if you are right? If that will be possible? I can't tell, mother, am I full of my own ideas or yours. You see, I am nearly twenty-four, and they ought to be my own." That, Susan informed him, must depend upon his comprehension. "If you are intelligent, if your ideas are your own, you won't help to create a war by going into it. You won't listen to the wild talk of people who have nothing to lose. The majority is always like that. Either you are superior or you are not. It is easier not to be. To go with the mob. There are difficulties connected with superiority, it is never popular, but I prefer it to the

other. I especially prefer it for you. You will answer your doubts, you see, by what you do. Your actions will show how independent you are." The expression of troubled questioning, she observed, did not leave him.

"I suppose you are right," he half-heartedly agreed. "That doesn't make it easier for me when all the rest have ideas that are worth fighting for. I don't know anyone my age who is neutral. It isn't the right age for neutrality. I can tell you this—I haven't a particle of sympathy with the South. I'm for the Union. Father taught me that. He was always for it. He said Kentucky must never desert it. If I am neutral it will be to help the United States. Keep them together. Mother, I warn you, if Kentucky does uphold the Union I will support it with a Lincoln gun."

* * *

Her conversation with Elisha put Susan in a bad humor; she had, with Elisha gone, dinner alone, and through it she preserved a rigid demeanor. She drank neither sherry nor Madeira but, contrary to the local feminine habit, took brandy with her coffee. Susan was sixty years old; an age, she asserted, when she could with entire propriety drink what she pleased. Lately, she realized, she had been annoyed a number of times by Elisha. That was a new aspect of their relationship; he had not, until the present, been stubborn or contradictory. He had been willing to listen to her. He still, actually, listened to her, but now it was with reservations. He continually advanced opinions different from hers. She wanted him to

have a mind of his own, in short to be a man, but she knew what was best for him. There was a great difference between the vigor of his spirit and the capability of his body, and she had to keep one from exhausting, breaking down, the other. It was, for example, absurd for Elisha even to consider being a soldier. He could not endure the hardships of a military life and campaigns. Elisha took cold at the slightest provocation, and there were other minor complications—his skin was too sensitive to bear the touch of wool. All his underclothes were especially made in New York of a fine cotton. In winter his great-coat was deep with fur. He could only eat especial things, especially prepared. No, Elisha should never become a soldier.

That painful necessity would not arrive, Susan reassured herself, walking in the garden. The sky was densely purple with stars like a thin silver dust. The heat, she thought, had increased. The gate on Wilkinson Street clicked, and she could see the vague approaching form of a man. It was James Harlan. "I am glad you are here," she said at once, crisply; "I'm in what you might call a state of mind; you are always a relief." He begged her not to be too certain of that. "Are you alone for the evening?" he asked. "Yes," she replied, "I am. Until Elisha returns from Greenland. I should think at midnight." Harlan was glad of that. "James Speed is here from Louisville," he explained; "there is a gentleman with him we would both like you to meet. To listen to, Susan. It is Lieutenant William Nelson."

"Mr. Harlan," she replied, "Bull Nelson is the last man I want to see here. I am surprised. You ought to know

how I feel about him." She could see that Harlan was smiling at her. "Dear Susan," he asserted, "you have made yourself so important to us, to the cause of Kentucky, that it is your duty to see him. The truth is we have something of the greatest importance to discuss. If you will allow me I'll fetch James Speed and Nelson." James Harlan's insistence, Susan realized, had increased her feeling of annoyance. She met the three men in her most formal drawingroom and at once conceived a marked dislike for William Nelson. He was a big robust man with a bright colored face and dense curling black hair; a man full of physical vigor and assertiveness. His manners were well enough.

"This is a privilege," he told Susan, with a bow. James Speed and Harlan were silent. "I asked Judge Harlan to bring me here," Nelson proceeded directly. "That, really, is why Speed and myself are in Frankfort. For the purpose of seeing you." Susan Abel said remotely, "Sit down, Mr. Nelson." She took a place on the small sofa under James Sash's portrait. "Mrs. Abel," Nelson proceeded, "you know, of course, all about what we now call the Lincoln guns. You know how I persuaded Mr. Lincoln to let us have five thousand muskets for the loyal men of Kentucky. You will remember they were shipped to Cincinnati and that I forwarded some to Jeffersonville, across the river from Louisville. Well, as you know too, they were at last delivered to the right men among us. The Home Guards in the different counties got them. Mrs. Abel, we said if the Home Guards were at least as well armed as Simon Buckner's State Guard we could make sure the rebels wouldn't

force Kentucky into the Confederacy. We could keep Kentucky neutral. A lot of people believed that, some believe it still. They think the state can and ought to stay neutral. That," he said gravely, "is now impossible."

"What does that mean?" Susan Abel demanded sharply. "I don't understand you. Mr. Nelson, why is it impossible for Kentucky to stay neutral?"

"For three reasons," Nelson concisely replied; "the first is the fact that neutrality does not and never can exist. Neither side wants it. Kentucky has a safe majority for the Union. At the same time there is a strong state rights sentiment. Men are for you or against you but they are not neutral. When the State Legislature, in May, declared for that it was actually a Union measure. When it refused to call a sovereign convention, and refer the position of the state to the people, that was a Union measure. The legislature, frankly, was afraid to risk so much. The Union leaders needed time. They knew that when the Kentucky people deliberated it would be to act sensibly."

"You make it sound like a legislature of women," Susan commented.

He ignored that. "The second reason is physical," William Nelson asserted. "We have seven hundred miles of unprotected border, and three Union states, on the North, but on the South there is one Confederate state, Tennessee, and only one important passageway into Kentucky. We are cut off, in other words, from the South; we are a continuous land, except for the Ohio river, with the North. Mrs. Abel, we are not a cotton state; negroes are unimportant to us; what Georgia and Alabama want would be fatal here. There are some of us who think

the Union can't be held together without Kentucky. If that is so it would be fatal to hesitate."

"None of that is new or very moving," Susan replied. "We all realize Kentucky borders on the Ohio and that there are mountains in Tennessee. Please remember that I have given a large amount of money to help organize, and even arm, the Home Guards. When I did that I was assured it would be used to keep Kentucky out of the war. That promise, Judge Harlan will recall it, was made to me in this room. Now you say it was impossible. My money must be spent for a purpose I abhor."

"What Mrs. Abel says is true," James Harlan confessed. "I wish I could contradict it. I can't. Events have proved too much for us. The Southern sentiment especially. That in itself forced us to give up all hope of remaining neutral." It had been vain from the first, James Speed added. "Perhaps there will be neutrality in heaven; Nelson is right, there is none, worth the name, on earth. Walker, the Confederate Secretary of State, wrote Magoffin for troops as early as April. The same month Blanton Duncan advertised in the Louisville Journal he was enlisting men for the South. We all know what Taylor's purpose was in Kentucky. My brother, Joshua, who is close to the President, told me that Mr. Lincoln admitted our need of Kentucky."

"How can it matter what Mr. Lincoln admits?" Susan asked contemptuously: "if I have any sympathy with the South it is because of Mr. Lincoln. He is too grotesque! Fortunately he isn't important. We must have him, I suppose, for four years, and then he can be forgotten."

"The third reason," William Nelson went on, "is more

difficult to explain. The Kentucky mind, Mrs. Abel, is instinctively loyal. The attachments of a Kentuckian are firm. We are not a cunning people. It is possible we could be called slow-minded. I am not certain that is a bad quality. It is not bad where the stability of a country is concerned. Such people are, at bottom, practical; the history of the state has been a record of practical difficulties: commerce and currency and the soil. The South is different. It is chimerical. No, the South would not suit us. We belong by nature and situation and spirit to the Union." He convinced Susan of nothing. "You must not expect me to support you in any of this," she told Harlan. "I won't help to drag Kentucky into a war that will divide families and set brothers to killing each other. I am sorry I gave a dollar for the Lincoln guns." James Harlan rose and bowed profoundly. "Forgive us," he begged her; "this is all most unbecoming to your charm."

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Susan Abel, naturally, said nothing to Elisha about the visit of Judge Harlan with Speed and Lieutenant Nelson. She had breakfast with him late of the following morning, in a small half-open paved space back of the diningroom. The house had been built by James Sash, early in the century; he had attached a conservatory to the diningroom; but Susan, when she moved with Manoah to Frankfort, had changed it into a pleasant and informal place for breakfast. She gathered it had been very vigorous at Greenland. "Wickliffe Sash all but had a fight with Belvard," Elisha told her. "You wouldn't have

guessed they were brothers. Wickliffe is the only one in his family who is for the South. He enlisted in Saunders Bruce's company, at Lexington, last week. He told Belvard that no one who was anything would be a black Republican. Not in Kentucky. He said only storekeepers and men from the mountains were. It didn't matter, Wickliffe said, what they did or thought. They were not gentlemen."

"Didn't Wickliffe think his brother Belvard was a gentleman?" Susan asked. He ignored that. "Wickliffe said the Southern cause was beautiful," Elisha continued; "But there wasn't any nobility at all in the North. They just wanted to steal our niggers. You couldn't love the North, he said, but you had to love the South." His mother wanted to know what he had replied. "It was hard," Elisha admitted. "Most of what I could say seemed so cold. After Wickliffe. It was no good bringing up the Constitution again. I did explain how hard we had tried to make a country, and fought against nearly everybody to do it, and how frightful it would be for it all to go to nothing. The Hazels agreed with Wickliffe of course. Mason said he wouldn't allow anyone to come into his garden and take a flower let alone his negroes. I don't know why—and it's exactly what I said—but all the arguments for the South are so much handsomer than any of ours."

"Emotion appears handsomer than reason," Susan Abel carefully explained. "It isn't really. Only the most superior people understand and appreciate reason. It's nonsense to say that all the highly-bred men of Kentucky are for states rights and the rest are storekeepers. Mr. Crit-

tenden is for the Union, and so is Mr. Guthrie. Judge Nicholas is Union, and Doctor Breckenridge and Judge Harlan and Mr. Todd and Garrett Davis and George Robertson. They were every one friends of your father's. General Combs is a Union supporter, and Mr. Bristow is and Charles Marshall. That is why Kentucky must stay out of the war. Elisha, we'd be so badly injured we would never recover. Never." He spoke doubtfully. "I don't know if I told you, mother, Camp Dick Robinson is going to be officially opened the day after election, and I want to be there. Everybody will. All the Sashes, of course, and the News. Even the Hazels and people who are against it."

Susan Abel was silent; she was, seemingly, intent upon her coffee cup. In reality she was thinking as rapidly as possible: Camp Dick Robinson was the Union station for recruits William Nelson had established on the Danville pike south of Lexington. She did not want Elisha to grow familiar with it; she wanted to keep him as far removed as possible from the military spirit it must create; but, obviously, she could not forbid him to go there. After all, as Elisha had pointed out, he was twenty-three years old. "I am certain it will be stupid," she said; "there won't really be a camp, with soldiers and drilling, for weeks yet; but if the family is going, and you'd like to, I'll go with you." It seemed to Susan that a faint disappointment settled over Elisha; and that increased the annoyance with him that had possessed her for the last few days. She barely restrained an angry comment. "It will be very nice," he said, rising. "Will you excuse me. I have to ride into Frankfort."

Susan wondered, alone, about her whole attitude toward Elisha. Her demands, where he was concerned, were very rigid. Possessive. But, she repeated, she wanted him to have a right sort of life, full of the things she knew were good for him. There was more than a chance, with his father's uncritical blood in him, that he might make a serious and perhaps fatal error of choice. She must prevent that. Elisha had no interest in girls; none in marriage; until now Susan had been privately glad of that. Perhaps it was a mistake. If she could select a girl suitable for Elisha, a girl at once well-born and simple and modest, she might be a help with him. Together they could, without doubt, manage Elisha.

He wasn't, Susan Abel realized, easy to manage. There was Cutts blood in him as well as his father's. She was driving with him to the camp established on Dick Robinson's farm; it was the middle of morning; the sky was overcast, threatening rain, and the heat had mitigated. The Danville pike was filled with carriages and wagons all moving toward the encampment. Susan saw most of her familiar world. The camp itself, exactly as she had predicted, was the reverse of impressive. There was no military organization, no officers formal in smart uniforms, no stirring music. A company of men from Tennessee was actually in rags. William Nelson, accompanied by Thomas Bramlette and a Mr. Landrum, came up to her at once. She presented Elisha to Lieutenant Nelson and was carefully polite. "You see," Nelson said pleasantly, "we are still practical instead of imposing."

Susan was appropriately gracious. "Our tents," he continued, "are the maple trees, and our guns are sticks. We

hope to change that." James Harlan, mounted on an informal stand, spoke. He had dismissed, Susan realized, all pretense of neutrality. A nondescript collection of recruits stood facing him, and back of that the carriages and wagons, the countryside, were banked. "Men of Kentucky," Judge Harlan said, "and those of you who have come from Tennessee, we welcome you here to earth of the United States. You stand on soil of the Union. This, today, is an especial part of the glorious state of Kentucky. Today it is especial, an enlisting place for men who believe in the Union, but tomorrow I hope it will be no more than part of the soil of a whole loyal state. Anything else is unthinkable."

Gabriel Sash was standing beside Susan Abel's carriage, and he said, "That is plain enough. If it goes on like this we'll have Simon Buckner and the State Guard shooting us down." Not, she returned, without some show of justice. "I am opposed to all of it, Gabriel," she reasserted. "If you want to keep out of war stay away from powder. It was a mistake, I see now, to arm the Home Guards. Let General Buckner march his companies into the Southern army. That wouldn't hurt us. Not really. Kentucky can take care of itself." He replied, "I am afraid it is too late. Now that we have a Union legislature. The states rights party only carried one district in the west." Elisha asked what that would mean. His mother answered for Gabriel Sash. "If there are enough hotheaded fools, like those around us, it will mean war. One part of you, Elisha, will turn on the other." Mr. Crittenden was speaking.

"I have consistently tried to avert the possibility of a

strife too terrible for words. Kentucky, of olden time, has been inured to battle, but Kentuckians have never fought among themselves. History has indicated what the horrors of that fratricidal war must be. Courageous men, honorable and bitter in principle, arrayed in the panoply of Bellona. Desolated mothers. Our silver streams, in that event, would run crimson, a lurid glare bathe Kentucky in the tints of hell. But there are worse things than living streams of blood. There is One, the greatest of all, who willingly gave His blood to purify men. If Kentucky, in her noble turn, is forced to emulate Him—," Susan Abel turned to her son. "I am sorry," she said; "I am quite faint. Do you mind very much taking me home." There was nothing, naturally, that could furnish him with an objection. When they were free of the camp Elisha gazed at her curiously. "Do you know," he said at last, "that is absolutely the first time I ever heard you were faint. It ought to worry me a lot." She touched his hand affectionately, and sat back with closed eyes.

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It was increasingly clear to Susan Abel that Kentucky was fast entering the war; but the fact that it was now definitely Union in sentiment had no power to reconcile her with the general military activity. She was, she found, no longer consulted about the course and necessities of the state. No one who still insisted on neutrality was regarded seriously. Mr. Magoffin had protested at Washington against the establishment of Camp Dick Robinson,

but Lincoln refused to listen to his logic. There were, by way of answer, three Confederate camps established in Kentucky, one within thirty miles of Frankfort. Susan decided, suddenly, to leave Kentucky, to go abroad: she would spend the winter with Elisha in Egypt. She had scarcely left Frankfort during the thirty years of her marriage. No more than for an occasional trip to New Orleans or Philadelphia or to a northern spa. Elisha had been to France and London, he had stayed in the English country, but he knew nothing of Europe. It was time, before he was definitely settled, that he did.

They would go first to Italy, perhaps stay a month in Rome. It would be very pleasant there, Susan knew, for any member of her family. The foreign embassies were widely ornamented by various Cutts. What a fool she had been! That, the diplomatic service, was exactly where Elisha ought to be. It would not mean that she must lose him. She could live at Madrid or Paris or St. Petersburg, anywhere on the Continent, as easily as in Kentucky. There was nothing now, except it might be Elisha, to keep her in Frankfort. She'd go to Washington at once, and see the ridiculous Mr. Lincoln. Even he must realize how appropriately Elisha Cutts Abel would decorate one of the major embassies. "I have a marvelous plan for you," she told her son; "for both of us really. You won't object if I am a little selfish. Kentucky just now is the last place in the world to be. We'll go to Europe; or, rather, we will stay for a little in Italy and then remove to Egypt for the winter. Wait, Elisha, don't interrupt me please. That is only part of it. You won't read law seriously; you don't like banking and money; we are always worried about

something to do for you; and at last I have it. The diplomatic service.

"I wouldn't have considered it while your father was alive; then we would have lost all sight of you; now, unhappily, it is different. There is nothing to keep me here. Darling, I don't mean I'd be a nuisance to you. I hope I'm too worldly for that. But I could see you occasionally." Elisha stared at her lost in amazement. "Go to Europe. Egypt for the winter," he repeated. "Now! Why, mother, you must be mad. Desert Kentucky and the United States at the darkest hour of their existence. When the South is attacking us." A flush spread over his usually colorless face. "Besides, I don't want to enter the diplomatic corps and live in Europe. I have already made up my mind what I'll do—I am going to be a statesman. A statesman," he repeated firmly. "I can do more for my country that way than any other." They were seated in the hall, and he walked away from her and stood in the open doorway, looking out into the garden.

Susan Abel realized that a crisis had arrived in their existence. It had been a grave mistake to announce her purpose so suddenly and so flatly; she had no means of retreat, of escape, from it; she must face the situation she had created. "Elisha," she proceeded, "I am going to insist on your doing what I have explained. If this war is serious, and I am assured it is very serious, no one will have a chance to be what you would call a statesman for years. Perhaps, in the United States, in that sense, there will never be another. The diplomatic service is the only place left for an American gentleman. You must listen to me now if you never do it again." He had returned from

the door, and, Susan saw, with a sinking heart, there was an increased dignity, a new maturity, in his bearing.

"You forget one thing," he said clearly, "and that is the Abel blood in me. It is Kentucky blood, and that means it is pretty much bound up with Kentucky things. I know more about the history of my family, my father's family, than you do. You were never very interested in it. I don't think you even knew about Gabriel Sash, the first Gabriel Sash. He was one of the Long Hunters. Well, he came out of the forest, when Harrodsburg was Harrodstown, and married Nancy Abel. They had a baby, and then Gabriel left her. He went back into the forest and they never saw him again. I don't think he wanted to do that; he had to. It was in his blood. Kentucky and the woods. This is queer, but it's so—Belvard Sash told me that his father, he is Gabriel Sash too, remember, went into the woods and sat for hours by himself. Whenever his father was bothered, Belvard said, he just disappeared in the Calydon woods. It nearly kills him to cut down a tree.

"Well, mother, I'm not like that; I wasn't intended for a forest; it's different in me—I know the minute I'm out of Kentucky. If you blindfolded me and took me across the border I could tell the instant I was somewhere else. I'd be unhappy. I want to be a statesman like Henry Clay. If what you say is going to happen it will be more important than ever to have some men, as near like that as possible, left. I might be one. At least I'm going to try. Anyhow, I couldn't leave Kentucky even if all that came to nothing. We'd be running away. God, we could never come back. No one would ever look at us again."

"I find," Susan Abel said icily, "that you are melodramatic. I suppose it is the privilege of young people. You are rather amusing, at the same time, about your father's family. You seem to forget that I have had it on all sides of me for thirty years. Longer than you've been alive. I have never heard a complaint about my attitude toward it. Mr. Abel was satisfied with me. But," her voice grew harder, "your lecture on honor was unnecessary. In fact, it was impertinent. There is only one variety of honor but there are a number of different kinds of courage. You cannot understand that. I have tried to explain it before. All you said comes to this—you have a strong local, a provincial, instinct; and, like a child, you are attracted by noise. By the firing off of guns. A cheap patriotism. We will not, naturally, go to Egypt; you must continue in your ambition to be a second Henry Clay. I will point out to you, though, that Mr. Clay never got to be president. You must ask yourself why. It might be useful in your career to understand that."

The color had left Elisha Abel's cheeks; he stood rigidly—he seemed very brittle—before her. "I will tell you about Mr. Clay," he replied; "he never got to be president because he loved Kentucky too much. He will always be, for us, better than president." Elisha went slowly and stiffly up the wide staircase to the second story. Susan was forced to sit down; her knees were weak. She was furious at her son; yet an unwilling admiration for him forced itself into her anger. He was like his father but better. He had taken something, a fine stiffness, from her family. She realized that Elisha had defeated her, and she was concerned, at that recognition,

about their future relationship. How would it affect his feeling for her? What effect would it have on him in the present situation of his beloved state. He must not go to war, Susan Abel cried silently; it will kill him.

In an hour it would be time for dinner, and she dreaded that ceremony; she did not, just then, want to see Elisha. I'll send down word I have a headache, she thought. That was no better than putting off a difficult moment. It was, Elisha had shown her, cowardly. She dressed, with great particularity, in white and lavender, with a rope of pearls, and sat in formal propriety behind an elaborate silver tea service. Elisha was obviously tired out; there were palpable shadows in the hollows of his cheeks. A crushing tenderness of love for him swept over her. Susan wanted to kiss him and hold him in her arms. It was, for them, impossible.

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For the first time in her existence a tide of contrary events swept over Susan Abel. She had, until now, directed practically all the individuals and activities personal to her; she had imposed her will upon life; but, suddenly, life and individuals were indifferent to her. Kentucky, for example, was moving with an increasing, a headlong, speed into the path of war. The first Battle of Manassas had enormously benefited the states rights cause. Elisha was silent, morose. He no longer discussed the national situation with her or exposed his own opinions and necessities. She forced herself, correspondingly, to keep out of view all her tender apprehensions

for him. Susan often was, too, wholly annoyed with Elisha. She wanted to shake him. She had, she recalled, spoken to him about a family gathering: it furnished her with a safe and pleasant approach to her son. "I am going to ask them all," she explained. "At first I only intended to have those more or less your own age. The other is better. If the family is here together they may see that it is impossible for Kentucky to support one side or the other. Why, Elisha, if that happened we would all be dead in no time. It can't be allowed."

Susan Able saw, standing on the portico of her house, that there were more than a hundred, perhaps two hundred, members of the Sash and Abel families scattered through the dusk over her lawn. A considerable number, too, were naturally absent. She was amazed at the extent of Manoah's relationships and close connections. Gabriel Sash came up and spoke to her. She liked Gabriel; he had a quiet ironical manner; he was remote from the absurdities and heats of life; but his wife Liddy—she had been Liddy Hazel—was a fool. She had not spoken to Gabriel Sash since the day he admitted his wholly Union sentiments. "Well," he said, indicating the people below them, "there you see, in almost every detail, the battle between the states. Susan, it is raging under your very eyes. Someone, I expect, will shoot his grandmother or little son at any minute."

She had no taste to agree with the lightness of Gabriel Sash's tone. "It isn't civilized," she said; "it isn't human. I can't tell you how it depresses me. I am afraid of people, Gabriel, when they lose their reason. I still don't believe Kentucky will." He became serious. "It has lost it," he

replied. "It's gone, Susan, make up your mind to that. Make your plans with that in your mind. I know how you feel about Elisha. I'm dreadfully sorry. No one can help this. At least we know that Elisha is on the right side." She thought, I don't want him to be on any side. Elisha can't go to war. He isn't strong enough. Soon after that Susan encountered Liddy Sash, hanging on to the arm of Wickliffe, her youngest son. "I have only him, now," she told Susan; "my husband and my other two sons deserted us. They have joined the Yankees." It was a good thing for her, Susan Abel declared, that at least part of her family showed some common sense. "You have so much of that in the North," Liddy replied sweetly. "We like other things better in the South." Susan said, "Hot bread for instance." She pointedly turned away from Liddy. The woman was a hopeless idiot.

A number of older people eventually sat with Susan Abel beside a great holly tree: Mrs. Thomas Hazel and her eldest son, Archelaus; his wife, Charlotte, was ill at Greenland; Henry New and his wife—he had married Sarah McKee Sash, Gabriel's sister; and Nancy Sash. Nancy, Susan realized, was practically at her own age. She had, when they were all young, engaged herself to marry Manoah Abel; but she had broken her engagement, for some fantastic reason, immediately after Manoah had killed Jarrot Bensalem. Nancy was still handsome, in the gaunt manner of her family; but it was a dry, a dusty, handsomeness; her cheeks had the color and texture of rose pot-pourri. There was an odor in her wide skirts of dead roses. He could not believe, Henry New said, that the evening was fair.

"It seems to me the sky must be black with clouds. I have the feeling that goes before a thunderstorm and think, all the time, I hear thunder and lightning." Archelaus Hazel said, "I wish we had the feeling that follows a storm, the sense of relief. I saw John Morgan yesterday; he is very restless in Kentucky. The death of his wife helped that. I tell you the whole State Guard will leave soon with Buckner." Gabriel Sash hoped Magoffin would go with them. Bland Hazel, Archelaus's brother, came up at that moment. "Governor Magoffin!" he exclaimed: "we couldn't do without him. He is practically the only honorable man in the state government." A strained silence met this announcement. "Magoffin and John Breckenridge have almost saved our good name," Bland added.

Susan Abel disliked him intensely. He was precisely the sort of Kentuckian, vain and bad-tempered, dangerous, that, she considered, represented the worst elements of local character.

"The Governor has been unfortunate," Henry New declared; "his duty has reached in one direction and his sympathies in another. There is no doubt he is honest. Mr. Breckenridge is more than honest. That doesn't stop them from being mistaken."

"No," Bland admitted, "it doesn't. You are an honest man, but that has failed to keep you from spreading lies and defaming the noblest cause under the sun." Archelaus Hazel rose and moved toward his brother. "I am honest too," he said; "so you must believe me when I say you are a nuisance. More than that, you would make a nuisance out of any cause. It seems to me, after you have

apologized to Susan, you had better leave for Calydon at once."

There were times, Bland replied, when the ordinary rules of conduct must be put aside. "There are greater necessities than politeness," he insisted. "Women understand that. Times when even the closest relationships have to be forgotten. This is one of them." Archelaus begged him not to be ridiculous. "If you think you can force a fight on me you're insane. There is enough of that already." Henry New joined them. "Thank you, Archelaus," he said; "after all this is my affair. What lies?" he demanded, facing Bland Hazel.

But Bland's animosity, Susan saw, had left Henry New; it was fixed upon his brother. "You have always been superior," Bland said to Archelaus Hazel; "and Charlotte has been damned superior. You think too much of yourselves at Greenland. Now you have deserted your inheritance, gone over to Lincoln, that will have to end. You have joined the niggers," he asserted. "As usual," Archelaus replied, "you are wrong. We are freeing ourselves from the negroes. You belong to the black party. You have associated with them, and lived in stables, all your life. That is why you are so ignorant as to insult Susan's hospitality and speak of Charlotte in a political discussion." Susan realized that Archelaus was, at last, cold with anger. Bland's fury was plain. He managed to restrain his speech. "I am sorry, Susan," he said, "if the depth of my feeling has annoyed you. I will send my apologies to Charlotte," Bland returned to his brother; "then we can continue this political discussion." He was interrupted by the appearance of Ambrose, Henry New's

son. He drew his father aside and spoke rapidly. Ambrose left, almost running. Mason Hazel, less reticent, arrived, breathless, to tell Archelaus that he must leave at once. "A message came from Captain Morgan. Arms are being moved to Lexington for Camp Dick Robinson, and the State Guard must stop them. John and Callam and Wickliffe Sash are getting horses. It's certain to end in a fight with the Home Guards."

Susan Abel left them hastily, in search of Elisha. "Where is Elisha?" she asked Belvard Sash. He didn't know. "I have got to find James. We haven't a minute to lose. Morgan will never get our guns. We'll have a chance, now, to show the South, the State Guard, what the Union means." Susan encountered Green New, another of Henry's sons. "Where is Elisha?" she demanded. "He went with Ambrose," Green told her. "I expect they're on their way to Lexington. Father left, Doctor Dudley will need his advice, but I had to wait and see to getting mother and Mirabelle and Mary and the children safe home."

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THE party drained hurriedly and largely silent away. The polite formalities of leavetaking were for the most part ignored. The house was suddenly still. A dread settled upon Susan. Elisha had gone without saying a word to her. She had, he made clear, no hold upon him at all. A bitter resentment took possession of her. He had no right to ignore all that she had been to him. Actually Susan Abel cried. But she very soon stopped that. She

detested all displays of weak or useless emotion. Her house, deserted by Elisha, grew lonelier. She looked at her watch, and was surprised to find that it was not yet ten o'clock. Susan had thought it must be close to morning. Elisha had deserted her, gone off with Ambrose New for Lexington, where, most probably, there would be fighting. Men killed on the streets. In imagination she saw Elisha shot through the head and lying dead in a gutter. An agony of love and despair filled her. With a sharp decision she pulled the ornamental bell rope in her room. A servant quickly responded.

"Tell Whitaker I want my carriage as soon as he can harness the horses. Then come back and get some things for my bag. We are going to Lexington." What, when she arrived there, Susan would do she had no idea of. I'll go to the Phoenix Hotel, she told herself, and then ask about Elisha. Someone must find him for her. She would see Ethelbert Dudley, who was at the head of the Home Guards in Lexington, and explain that her son could not be allowed to join his company. Elisha would be furious at her but he'd get over that. She would rather have him furious and with her than absent for any purpose in the world. The lower rooms of the Phoenix Hotel were packed tight with men. She saw Major Johnson, he helped Susan and her maid through the crowd, and the proprietor of the hotel escorted her to a room. "If you meet any of my family," she told him, "especially my son, I want to see them. Tell Doctor Dudley or Judge Harlan, if they step in, where I am." Before long James Harlan appeared.

"Susan!" he exclaimed; "how in God's name did you

get here. At the worst possible time. I don't see how trouble can be avoided. I am going to order your carriage and send you out of it." She smiled at his masculine earnestness. "No," she answered, "I can't have that. James, Elisha is somewhere in Lexington. He came with Ambrose New when he heard about the guns for Camp Dick Robinson. Somebody must find him, James. I want him." Harlan said, "Susan, I'm relieved. You are, at heart, a woman after all. You're so devilish cold most of the time I began to doubt it. This is not only maternal, it's feminine. As a matter of fact Elisha would have to be in Lexington at present. There is no other place decent for him. Let me explain it to you. We must have these guns and Joe Desha nearly captured them on the train at Cynthania. We were forced to run them back to Covington, and send them on by Louisville. The guns will arrive about dawn today; the Confederates know that and are bound to take them. Dudley sent Mr. Milward to Camp Dick Robinson for help, but we cannot count on that before noon; by that time anything may have happened. So, you see, we need everybody available to hold off John Morgan for a little."

Susan, lost to all sense of humor, shuddered inwardly at the thought of Elisha attempting to hold off John Morgan. He would cut Elisha down with a single sweep of his sword. She caught James Harlan's hands. "I understand how you feel," she proceeded; "but you don't know Elisha. He isn't strong enough for any of this. He can't fight and sit out in the rain. It is raining this minute and you know it." She was right, Harlan replied; it was raining. Hard. "You are too solicitous about Elisha

Abel," he added. "I have seen something of him and he is a boy of spirit. Tonight he won't know if it is raining or not." Susan became indignant. "You are like every other man," she asserted: "the most selfish of creatures. All you care for is to save your guns. It doesn't matter what that costs. It would never enter your head that Elisha might die of pleurisy."

"A lot of men will die because of those guns and some of pleurisy," he declared solemnly. "I am sorry I must go." James Harlan, Susan realized, was useless. All the world had turned against her. She addressed, in her loneliness, her black maid. "There is going to be war in Kentucky, Anna Louise," she said. "Our men will be killed or die from exposure. My son is with the soldiers tonight. I came to Lexington to find him, but no one will help me." Anna Louise was obviously confounded by such an unprecedented confidence. That was too bad, she replied inanely. It certainly was a shame. All those pretty young gentlemen fighting and destructing each other. And Mr. Elisha with them. "I won't take off my clothes," Susan continued. "I will just lie down on the couch. Sit outside the door, Anna Louise, and let me know if anyone at all wants to see me." Perhaps, she thought, it will be Elisha. Someone who knows I'm here will see him. Half asleep she murmured her son's name.

When she woke the room was dark. Susan drew aside a curtain and looked down at the main street of Lexington. It was still raining, the gas lamps were pale blurs that illuminated nothing, there was a trace of sodden dawn above the houses. She opened the door to the corridor;

Anna Louise was bowed over asleep in her chair. The slave stirred uneasily and woke up. She was frightened. "I just fell off that holy minute," she asserted. "I been awake all night and then I fell off. It wasn't for no time." Susan Abel told her to come in the room and shut and lock the door. "I must bathe and change my clothes," she continued; "I don't want Elisha to find me like this. Get the bottle of lavender lotion and see that I have plenty of hot water." When Susan had finished bathing, when she was dressed, morning was a reality. It was gray and wet and utterly depressing. Susan drank all that a silver pot of coffee held without cream or sugar and then took a swallow or two of brandy.

Gabriel Sash and Green New took breakfast in Susan's room. "I have one son in the State Guard and two in the Home Guards," Gabriel said. "Three Hazels, their cousins, are in the Lexington Rifles. With Morgan. Archelaus is more for the Union than not but Bland is a bitter Breckenridge Democrat. Green, here, and Ambrose New support the North. I saw Simms Mayhew this morning, Susan; he enlisted with the Confederates at the Owen County Camp." Simms Mayhew was the son of Manoah's sister Felicity. "The guns have come," Gabriel Sash continued; "they are at the railroad depot. The State Guard is waiting for a bugle call to rally at the armory on Upper Street, the Home Guards are ordered to march on the depot when the court house bell rings. Hell, if you will excuse me, Susan, is near to breaking out. I hope Nelson sent cavalry from Camp Dick Robinson. Infantry would hardly be here at dark. I must get my affairs together. It's fortunate Liddy is well provided for." Susan asked

why. "I'll go, naturally," Gabriel replied. "Lovell Rosseau offered me a company in his command."

Susan was unreasonably annoyed at Gabriel. It was increasingly apparent to her that men thought their sole duty was fighting. Organized murder. She had often heard Manoah say that the genius of Kentucky lay in compromise. Henry Clay had been celebrated for his skillful adjustments; but that, it seemed, the state's best security, was now ignored. She stood at a window, her back to Gabriel and Green New, only half seeing the street below her. The rain continued. Suddenly Susan heard the faint clear notes of a bugle. The motion on the main street was arrested, there was a complete general pause, then men began running. Green and Gabriel Sash rose hastily. The tolling of the court house bell began. It rang, Susan felt, with an unendurable insistence. A door shut sharply, the men had gone. She had, for a moment, the illusion that the clapper of the court house bell was beating inside her head. Anna Louise stood trembling beside her. "The war is here," she told the negro woman.

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Later in the morning Mirabelle New, Green's wife—they lived in Lexington—appeared and entreated Susan to leave the Phoenix Hotel for the New house. "Thank you," Susan said, "I will stay here for a little yet. Elisha may come in any minute." Mirabelle was young and pretty. "My baby was six months old yesterday," she told Susan Abel. "He ought to be grown-up in time for

the next war," Susan replied bitterly. "We arranged it so Elisha could be killed in this one." Past noon there was the massed beat of horses' hoofs on the street. A muddy detachment of cavalry rode by. Susan recognized its commander—it was Colonel Bramlette. "There is Tom Bramlette," she said to Mirabelle New. "The soldiers from the Union camp are here." A sense of relief swept over her. "I am going down on the street, Mirabelle," she continued. "It will be safe now. I can at least walk in the direction of Jefferson Street and the depot." She would, the younger woman decided, go with Susan. They proceeded without interruption to where there was a plain view of the Louisville and Lexington Railroad station. A line of Home Guards was drawn up with a small brass cannon before the depot; the Union cavalry was guarding a number of wagons that men were loading with the boxes of guns. Susan saw Captain Morgan in earnest conversation with John Breckenridge and Major Johnson. They were all on horse. Morgan rode up to where the State Guard stood in formation.

"The Lexington Rifles will fall out and return to their homes," he ordered. "We will not bring bloodshed on our city except in a last extremity."

The obedience, the discipline, of his company was exact. It broke ranks and the members quietly withdrew. Then Susan saw Elisha. His head was bare, his pale hair plastered on his forehead by the rain; a piece of bagging was wrapped precariously about his shoulders; holding a Lincoln gun in one hand he climbed up beside the driver of a wagon filled with the cases of arms. "Elisha," she cried; "Elisha!" Only Mirabelle New heard her.

"Where did you see Elisha?" she asked. Susan did not heed her. The wagon that bore Elisha Abel drove creaking and swinging away. I will go to Camp Dick Robinson, she told herself. I'll make Whitaker drive me there immediately. She didn't. Susan returned to the emptiness of her house in Frankfort.

When she reached home the heedless weather cleared. All at once it was sunny and hot. She walked down the flowering terraces at the back to the Kentucky river. Halfway an arbor of cinnamon roses, filled with a golden dusk, was sweet with perfume and loud with bees. Elisha especially liked to linger there; it recalled him, thin and pale and determined, so vividly to her that she hurried on, fearful of a further regrettable display of emotion. The river was still low; its stone bed was almost everywhere visible. Close to the bank was a pool where, when they were little, Elisha and Delia had bathed. Gabriel Sash and his sisters, Sarah McKee and Eliza Rose had, in an earlier childhood, bathed there.

Susan stood a long while by the slow flowing river. In the spring it was full and swift and remorseless. Then it was bright, young. Now it was old and tired. Tired and old. Three days later Elisha came home. He arrived in a wagon like the one that had carried him away from her. But now, in spite of the heat, he was rolled in a blanket. There were scarlet patches on his cheeks. "I must go back as soon as possible," he told her. "I'm a lieutenant and attached to headquarters at Camp Dick Robinson." Whitaker helped him to his room. "Of course you must go back," Susan reassured him: "Your things will all be ready in no time." Night came and she

sat beside him with a lamp shaded from the intensity of his countenance. "Morgan didn't get our guns," he said in a rapid shallow voice. "We brought up the cannon that stood near the watch house. I was in the squad that went for it. Did Whitaker fetch in my gun?" Yes, she told Elisha; it was in a corner of the lower hall. "I reckon now I'll have a sword instead of a gun," he proceeded; "even a Lincoln gun."

She sat quietly, once more in black, her hands caught together on her lap. Elisha's voice continued, but it grew fainter; the fluctuating words were largely unintelligible. He became weaker. Doctor Pythian had refused to be definite. Mr. Spillman, the Presbyterian minister, was below, a servant informed her. Susan saw no one. She wanted no sympathy; she did not need advice. A pitiless understanding of herself exposed the motives of her actions: she cared nothing for the neutrality of Kentucky; she had only wanted to keep Elisha close by her. She had tried to command every minute of his life. All of Elisha's thoughts. A terrible blind selfishness had possessed her. As a result of that she had driven him unprepared into storm and a war. Her love had been a cause of humiliation to him; perhaps it had brought him to hate her. His speech ran in her mind. I will have a sword.

She wanted Elisha to have a sword, she found; a bright sword, sharp and honorable. Her love had nearly covered him with dishonor. In the morning Nancy Sash arrived. "I would like to help you with Elisha," the other woman who had loved Manoah said. "How is he?" She didn't know, Susan replied. "I can't tell. He is dreadfully weak. Nancy, Elisha isn't right in his head. It frightens me."

Nancy Sash was prepared for that development. "It doesn't really mean much," she observed. "Fever usually has that effect. Have you been up all night?" Susan Abel had. "Go to your room," Nancy directed her. "Stay there until dinner. I will call you if it is necessary." Susan lay rigidly on her back. Any relaxation or sleep was impossible. Love is a wicked and selfish thing, she told herself. Because of it perhaps I have killed Elisha. Love is a cowardly thing. She was not, Susan recognized, usually counted a coward. She had tried, she insisted, to save Elisha from danger and suffering; but, the truth was, she had thought only of herself, of her own peace and emotions; Elisha had been totally ignored. She wanted him to live, now, in order to be a soldier. For nothing else. It was infinitely better for him to die in war than exist ignominiously as a captive in Egypt.

What does it matter, Susan Abel repeated wretchedly, if his body is weak; his spirit is strong. Ease and safety and a long life are nothing. There was a knock at the door. It was Nancy Sash. "He is weaker," she said briefly. "Dr. Pythian was here. He had to leave but he is coming back directly. I thought you would like to be with Elisha. I told the servants we would have no dinner. If you want anything to eat they will carry it up to you." Elisha was breathing with an audible difficulty. His eyes were closed; his eyelids were blue and almost transparent. His hands moved restlessly over the bedcovers. Susan looked up, Doctor Pythian was standing beside her. "Elisha will die," she said simply. Doctor Pythian made no answer. "With your permission," he said, turning away from the bed, "I am going to try something not

generally practiced. I am going to wrap Elisha in sheets wetted with ice water."

It was dark again. Once more Nancy Sash drove her out of Elisha's room. Susan went down to the portico. The sky was purple with a silver dust of stars. Elisha now, she thought, was far away as the farthest star. Lieutenant Abel, she said to herself. Captain Abel. General Elisha Cutts Abel. A horse stopped outside the gate on Wilkinson Street, and a negro came up to the steps. Susan recognized that he belonged at Calydon. He gave her a note from Gabriel Sash. Susan went inside to a light. The note was disorganized, hurriedly written. "I hope Elisha is better," Gabriel wrote. "I don't want to add any worry to your already worried mind. You must know this. Bland Hazel killed Archelaus late this afternoon in a duel with pistols. He left at once to join Leonidas Polk in the South." Doctor Pythian came slowly down the stairs. "It is all right, Susan," he said; "Elisha is past the worst. He will live."

At dusk, in the barren mountains of eastern Kentucky, an aide galloped up to the head of the Third brigade of General Morgan's Confederate force. Wickliffe Sash, captain in the first battalion, was walking beside Colonel Smith, in immediate command. "We will rest here for the night," the aide said, with a shadowy salute. "General Morgan's order." That decision, Wickliffe told himself, had not come too soon by a moment. His company was practically incapable of another step. He returned to it. "Fall out," he ordered. The men collapsed where they were. Behind them the precarious way—the Rebel Trace —vanished in an abrupt turn around a high bare shoulder of mountain; they had come upon a contracted open space where, clinging to steep walls of stone, there were some scattered melancholy pine trees and a swift narrow

stream; ahead Wickliffe could see nothing but a rocky defile rapidly growing dark. The stream made a loud impetuous sound and a whip-poor-will called and called from a pine tree.

The first two brigades were mounted, but the third brigade was on foot—it had been composed of the men for whom no mounts could be provided. Wickliffe, however, was unable to decide if that were a disadvantage or a benefit. The animals had suffered more than the men—Colonel Giltner's brigade alone had lost at least two hundred horses. Morgan's mounted infantry, it seemed to him, had become foot cavalry. At any rate the Third battalion had kept up with the men on horseback. He said to Major Diamond, "I don't like the way the men look. They are not taking care of themselves. God, Diamond, their feet are cut to pieces." What, Major Diamond inquired, could they expect. "A hundred and fifty miles of these mountains in seven days. Worse than twenty miles a day climbing in formation. Some only left Huyter's Gap ten days ago. That's two hundred miles anyhow." Wickliffe saw that Diamond was discouraged. His own feet were so swollen that he didn't think his shoes would come off. He moved back to where his company lay in a variety of exhausted attitudes on the mountainside. "Where is the kitchen detail?" he demanded. "Ambrose Huffman," he called. "Where is Ambrose?" A short figure, fat and inexpressibly weary-looking, rose. "Get supper started," Wickliffe ordered him. "Send two men for wood and two for water. We want coffee before morning." It was little use, Huffman replied, to prepare supper. "There won't be nobody hardly to want it.

Captain Sash, it's God's truth, the boys are too tired to eat. Most of them are asleep right now."

"I want two men to go for wood and two with buckets for water," Wickliffe Sash repeated harshly. "You have forty-five minutes to make a mess of bread and boil bacon and greens, if we have any. With coffee. Lieutenant Brenno." First Lieutenant Jacob Brenno stood at an uncertain attention. "Send up the usual picket detail to the brigade head. The rest can stay where they are for half an hour. Then get them in line for supper. Everyone, Mr. Brenno. If Ambrose Huffman isn't ready from now on he'll do with a musket instead of a frying-pan. In the front rank. It won't matter to me if we lose a good cook." Wickliffe sat on a small ledge of rock. He was, like Major Diamond, filled with doubts.

What day was it? It was the seventh day of June in 1864. They had reached Pound Gap, beyond the Virginia line, the second, after dislodging the small Union force guarding that entrance to Kentucky. General Morgan absolutely counted on investing Mount Sterling tomorrow. By God, he had no time to lose! When it was discovered that he was again raiding in Kentucky—it must be known to the Union headquarters in the state tomorrow—there would be an overwhelming concentration of troops upon him. General Hobson, with six regiments of cavalry, three thousand strong, was with Burbridge and part of the Twenty-third Union army corps somewhere near Louisa, south of Pound Gap. General Averill and General Crook were on the march. General Burbridge would not linger in the east. Morgan, at best, had twenty-five hundred men. His success depended upon

the outcome of the race between the Federal commander and himself for Mount Sterling. The distance was greater for General Burbridge, and he was hampered with artillery; Morgan had no cannon; but his brigades were weary from the immediate exhausting past.

The odds against him, Wickliffe knew, were not important. This was Morgan's fourth raid into Kentucky—a state that had betrayed its heritage and remained part of the North—and he had always been opposed to enormous majorities of men and arms. On the whole successfully. John Hunt Morgan was a military genius. Everyone, North and South, acknowledged that. It belonged to his ability to make his force seem larger, infinitely more threatening, than it ever actually was. He split his command into small detachments and sent them here and there against towns and stockades and railway bridges and bases of Federal supplies. These individual assaults were made with great swiftness and the bodies of men composing them swiftly returned to the main body of troops. It was a further characteristic of General Morgan that all his engagements were fought upon the advance. When he retreated he retreated. Morgan then didn't stop for anything. That was why he still, after three years, had a command at all; why they were not all either killed or in Northern prisons.

The best of so much, Wickliffe Sash realized, belonged in the past. To the first and second raids and even to the disastrous third raid into Indiana and Ohio. When John Morgan had been captured. Yes, it was different now, with the unavoidable multiplication of his reverses. It was different, worse, with the whole Confederacy.

Wickliffe, sitting on cold rock in the fast gathering darkness, his body one intolerable ache, said to himself, We are licked. He said it and, deep within him, he knew it was true, but he would not acknowledge it. A miracle will save us, Wickliffe Sash added. England will recognize the Confederacy; the blockade will fail; a miracle, General Lee, will rescue us. But Morgan's situation was desperate. This must be his final raid and it must succeed. He was, for one thing, losing his prestige with the soldiers on paper. With President Davis and Richmond. They would not admit, through ignorance and jealousy, the enormous good General Morgan had worked in Kentucky. Again and again he had diverted, more than once actually scattered, the concentration of armies bent on the destruction of the Confederate resources and commands in Tennessee and in southern Virginia. If Morgan failed now it would be over with him. All Wickliffe Sash's weariness, his doubts, were lost sight of in his passionate realization that they must reach Mount Sterling before General Burbridge could get there. Before the Union forces had time to close around them.

On his left the kitchen fires made a sullen glow on the accomplished night. He could see the fires of companies ahead of him. There was an occasional call, and the distant scrape of horses' hoofs, a scarce moving figure—the brigades were largely silent and he could hear no singing. The strains of Stump-tailed Dolly and of General Stuart's favorite song, If you want to have a good time jine the Cavalry, were wholly absent. He could, now, hear Lieutenant Brenno stirring among the men of their company. "Line up for mess," Brenno cried;

"everyone on his feet." There was a slow responding movement and a half audible bitter cursing. Wickliffe Sash had a battered tin cup of coffee, a thin segment of bread hardly better than a burned paste of dough, and bacon boiled without greens.

Lieutenant-Colonel Martin requested his presence, and Wickliffe found him with Alston, who commanded the Second brigade, Colonel Giltner and General Morgan. Morgan, still a handsome figure, had his tunic unbuttoned and showed unmistakable traces of the continued strain on him. He had never, Wickliffe Sash believed, wholly recovered from his imprisonment in the Ohio Penitentiary. His voice was sharp and his periods short. The command was to move at daybreak. Its purposes, as usual, were diverse: Captain Jergens, with fifty men, would be detached to destroy the Frankfort and Louisville Railroad bridges. Major Chenowyeth would burn the railway bridges of the Kentucky Central. Captain Sash, who was especially familiar with the ground about Lexington, General Morgan required to proceed ahead with messages of his intentions to Confederate supporters in Fayette county.

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In the morning there was a space of gray depression, a physical agony at all further movement, and then the sun enveloped Wickliffe Sash in a blaze of transcendent beauty. The mountains fell away behind him; their gloomy ascents and stone precipices dissolved; and before him lay a wide and brilliant and pastoral plain.

There were, everywhere, noble groves and woodland meadows deep in grass shaded by aged sugar trees and elms and hickory and tulip poplars; he saw orderly pastures with whitewashed fences where horses burnished by the sun were slowly grazing with flowing tails and manes, Red Devon cattle like animals in dark copper. The pastures were woven with crystal streams; houses, tranquil and white, were set in the tall groves with lawns falling away in slopes and terraces of flowers; and everywhere the grass was bluer than green.

An intolerable sharp pain of recognition and longing, of relief, struck into Wickliffe. "By God!" he said out loud; "the bluegrass." The peace and loveliness of the land below him, the great houses among the trees and the small houses along the roads, with the morning smoke rising from their chimneys, wet his face with sudden irrepressible tears. It was the bluegrass! It was home. The privations and terrors of war, the brazen noise and hailing iron and lead, the swift silent perils, seemed to have been lost with the mountains. No one, on that vast sweet plain of happiness and plenty, must need food or shelter or security. Wickliffe, as General Morgan had acknowledged, knew it intimately: he had caught innumerable silvery fish in its innumerable clear silver rivers; he had shot quail and woodcock in its thickets, squirrels and wild turkey in the woods and clearings; there was hardly a house of consequence where—when, before the war, he was a boy—he had not danced to the fiddling of negroes and added to the gayety of the barbecues.

A general revival of spirits possessed Morgan's column. The men shouted happily and called to each other their

comments and appreciation of what, they would die to maintain, was the finest country God had ever made. There was a momentary relaxation of discipline, and then the files were closed, Morgan's marching formation was resumed. The advance guard rode four hundred yards ahead of the main body; posted at equal spaces of a hundred yards between it and the column were three videttes; six more were thrown out ahead of the guard, four at intervals of fifty yards and two, at a like distance, at the extreme front. Wickliffe Sash, mounted on the best horse the command could afford him, a pure blooded bright bay, trotted past the battalions, the advance guard, and the videttes. He bore no signs of his rank or service; a heavy revolver, however, was plainly in sight at his belt; and he had caught up the wide brim of his dusty hat with a black plume. Wickliffe was, for local and immediate purposes, a member of the Union Home Guards. To what company he belonged depended upon who might stop him and where he was examined.

That character, his characterization, was not new to him; he had assumed it before—on General Morgan's December raid—in the region he knew best. The papers he carried, two minute communications, were hidden in two of the cartridges that supplied his revolver. Wickliffe Sash paid small attention to them or to the potentiality of his situation. It was a phase of war, and war had grown to be a commonplace of existence; he accepted its diverse responsibilities and dangers largely mechanically. He had, providentially, escaped any physical hurt; but so many of the men who had enlisted with him in the fall of 1861 had been killed, he had become so familiar

with death and shocking injury, that he gave that finality only a perfunctory attention. There were moments still when fear touched him, but he regarded it as a distasteful finality in itself, and cast it off.

He left behind, at last, even the sound of Morgan's advance. Alone on the road that led toward Mount Sterling Wickliffe's thoughts attached themselves solely to his cousin Charlotte Hazel. In a very short while now he would be with her again for a few hours. Would this, he speculated, be a good time for their marriage? Mason Hazel, who had been forced, by the death of his father, to remain at Greenland, would be able to secure a preacher, sympathetic to the South, for the ceremony. Perhaps. Charlotte, after all, must decide that. He would agree, he would always agree, Wickliffe added, with her wishes. She was a heavenly female creature. He remembered in every detail the evening when he had first addressed to her his love. It had occurred at a family party given by Mrs. Abel in Frankfort just when, for him, the war began. Charlotte, at that time, was thirteen years old. They had walked down through a rose arbor to the river bank, and there he had kissed her. There, a girlish kiss, she kissed him. Wickliffe recalled the solemn tones of her voice. "I love you, Wickliffe, and nobody else and I will marry only you." Within an hour he had gone to Lexington in an effort to prevent a shipment of arms from reaching Fort Dick Robinson.

He had not seen Charlotte since then. He had been in Lexington, at Greenland, on the December raid, but she had gone to Louisville. That, however, with her promise, was comparatively unimportant. When I come home, he

told himself, now or later, Charlotte will marry me. Wickliffe Sash gazed down entertained by the great fair beard spread across his chest. What would Charlotte think of it? She would, more than likely, insist that it must be cut off. Well, he couldn't do that at present—it was, in places unaccustomed to his new maturity, decidedly useful. Wickliffe was, unobserved, riding hard; he came up to Mount Sterling and avoided the town by means of a side road upon the south. He planned to enter Lexington at dark.

Later his horse was finally exhausted, and he boldly demanded another at the stables of the Home Guards in Winchester. He was, he said, carrying dispatches from Mount Sterling to the Union leaders in Lexington—Morgan was raiding again. He had left his department in Virginia with over nine thousand cavalry and was expected to reach Pound Gap in three days or better. Soon he was urging an ungainly but vigorous black animal steadily westward. No one stopped him; he proceeded without accident or observation. As he drew nearer to Lexington he became increasingly impatient to see Charlotte and once more kiss her. It seemed incredible that she should exist so delicate and fragrant in a world loud and barren and torn by war. Lost in conjectures, in memory and anticipation, he came suddenly upon Lexington. It had a closed, almost deserted, appearance; the lights in the Phoenix Hotel were dim and few; he proceeded deliberately over Broadway to the house of John Morgan's cousin, Virgil Hunt. There, knocking the tops from the cartridges that held them, he delivered General Morgan's messages. It was very quiet in the bluegrass,

he learned. Virgil Hunt considered that the moment, with General Hobson withdrawn from Mount Sterling and Burbridge absent, was favorable for Morgan's purpose.

"Life is suspended with us," Virgil explained; "the streets in Lexington have the air of a funeral. The Yankee troops come and go; it has been two years almost since you were here. A Union regiment of cavalry, the Forty-fifth Kentucky, made Lexington their rendezvous in May. It was very social. Now, I believe, they are on the eastern front. I have seen something of your family—Calydon is closed; your mother is still in Montgomery; and I hear your father is at Richmond, attached to President Davis's staff. He never recovered from his sabre wound at Missionary Ridge. It's hard to realize that both your brothers are gone, Wickliffe. Splendid boys if they did support the North. Your cousin, Elisha Abel, has been reported missing. I see Mrs. Abel on the streets in Lexington occasionally. A cold self-contained woman. After Manoah Abel died she never let Elisha out of her sight. But the war cured that." Wickliffe Sash rose. When did he plan to leave, Virgil Hunt asked. "At once," Wickliffe told him; "I'll stop at Greenland and then go back to the column. It ought to be near. There wasn't much of a force at Mount Sterling. Well, we haven't a lot more. The details General Morgan sends out look like our main body."

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Wickliffe Sash went beyond the main entrance to Greenland and followed a woodroad, used by the farm

wagons, that led from the Paris turnpike to the slave quarters and tobacco barn. He hitched his horse lightly to a rack there and walked over the rough sod, through the darkness, to the house. He was, suddenly, excited. A kitchen wing extended one wall of the Hazel dwelling backward: in the past it would have been brightly lighted, filled with a gay, self-important stir of negroes; now it was dark and silent. Wickliffe stood listening on the portico. The house was silent, the high doors, open upon the hall, showed a glimmer of light, probably a solitary whale oil lamp, in the drawingroom at the left. He quietly entered—Mason Hazel was reading, Charlotte and their mother were sitting on a stiff black sofa.

Charlotte saw him first. She rose with a low exclamation, half frightened. Mason dropped his book and quickly secured a revolver from a table drawer. "Why," he said, relieved, "it's Wickliffe." Wickliffe Sash hesitated before Charlotte—he could not make up his mind whether he ought to kiss her at once or wait until they were alone. An intangible impulse made him delay. In reality he spoke properly to Mrs. Hazel first. "I am glad to be back again," he said simply, taking one of her hands in both of his. She was a small rigidly-held woman with fine white hair in a cap of rare lace and a high-bridged autocratic nose. Mrs. Hazel belonged to a celebrated Kentucky family; she was wholly devoted to the cause of the South; these were facts that she permitted no one to diminish; and Wickliffe saw that, in the face of the repeated disasters both to her family and the Confederacy, she was, if anything, stiffer in pride and certainty than ever.

He was, at the same time, vaguely conscious of a strangeness of manner in her. If it were possible for Mrs. Archelaus Hazel to be embarrassed she was, at that moment, embarrassed. Charlotte lowered her gaze. "Wickliffe," she proceeded in a small troubled voice, "we were terribly worried about you. It has been so long since we heard. You knew about John; Wickliffe, Callam was killed too, at Reseca. Last month. He was on General Hardee's staff." Mrs. Hazel sat erect and calm in stiff black silk. "Mason, I consider, has been the most unfortunate of my three sons," she said. "John and Callam lost their lives in battle, defending their honor and their land; Mason has had to stay at home—among the Yankees and women—and be a farmer." That subject, it was clear, was distasteful to Mason Hazel. "You have told us nothing about yourself," he reminded Wickliffe.

"It is not very encouraging," he replied. "As usual, General Morgan is trying to create a diversion without either men or ammunition. We were a long while, after Morgan was captured in Ohio, getting down South again. That was a strange raid. A nightmare. We rode all day and all night. Always. We fought, I am certain, in our sleep. At Salem, Indiana, there was a toy cannon, it wasn't eighteen inches long, loaded to the muzzle, waiting for us in the public square. But no one was left to fire it. There was some pillaging; the provost guard tried its best to stop it; the most ridiculous pillaging you ever heard of. The town, it seemed, manufactured calico principally, and the men went off with bolts of it tied to their saddles. They would throw away one color and pick up another. A man in my company carried a bird-cage with

three canaries in it for two days. I had to make another leave a useless chafing-dish behind. A private, Mason, had seven pairs of skates hung around his neck. Then at Piketon a man broke through the guard posted at a store and filled his pockets with horn buttons. At Vienna Colonel Smith made a feint against Madison. He returned the following morning.

"Vernon was next, it was held by a strong force, and we had to avoid Vernon. It was better at Dupont—they had a large meat packing place, and when we left every man had a ham slung at his saddle. But there was plenty to eat. The people baked once a week, they were always out when we stopped—there were stories about us, of course—and we got great quantities of bread. Hundreds of pies. We were blamed for not taking Cincinnati. Well, we couldn't take it. We couldn't have held it twenty-four hours if we had. God, Morgan didn't want Cincinnati. You see, we were trying to get away, to get home, then. Our purpose was almost accomplished. The old purpose. To create a diversion without men or ammunition. By then we were too tired, too exhausted, to think. I tell you we were twenty-two hours in the saddle day after day. Anyhow, we got lost going around Cincinnati at night—Cluke couldn't hold his regiment together, he never did except in battle, it was at the rear of the Second brigade and strayed all over the country, so there was a long space between it and the First brigade. When we came to street crossings in the suburbs part of the command would go one way and part another. It was so black and confusing we had to light bundles of paper to find our way.

"Whenever we halted everyone was asleep in a second. The men would go off into the fields and sleep until the enemy waked them up. We got away, at last, from Cincinnati. It began to look as though we were safe. As though we had been successful. At Williamsburg General Morgan camped for the night. The next day we marched through a lot of towns and had a skirmish at Berlin. Nothing. Then we camped until three o'clock in the morning. By that time we had to chop our way through the trees felled across the road. All the bridges were burned. This was in July. On the eighteenth we stopped for an hour at Chester to re-form the column and find a guide. That was a mistake. It was fatal. We couldn't, then, reach the ford at Buffington, cross the Ohio, before dark. We got to the river bank about eight o'clock. There was an earthworks guarding the ford and General Morgan couldn't make up his mind about attacking it. The position was defended by regular troops and they had two heavy guns. The column had to cross the river that night or never. It turned out to be never. The weather ruined us. Rain. The river was so high transports and gunboats came all the way up to Buffington Island. The ammunition for our artillery was done; there were less than three cartridges to the piece; it was pitch black and we knew nothing about the land or the disposition of the enemy. We had to cross and we couldn't, with our force, assault an unknown position at night.

"General Morgan decided to attack at early dawn, and when it began to be light we moved against the fortification and found it empty. The enemy had gone away in the darkness. If our scouts had seen that, if they had

been awake, almost the whole division would have been over the river before the Union troops arrived. Their advance guard came up and Colonel Smith smashed it. He took fifty prisoners and a piece of artillery. But General Judah was close behind with eight thousand men. We were in a valley that ran beside the Ohio for perhaps a mile and very narrow at the south end. Colonel Smith formed there. He turned back Judah's cavalry but it was no use. His two regiments didn't have five hundred men in them. General Hobson's force soon came up and joined Judah. We were between them with the gunboats shelling us from the river.

"The valley was turned into a section of hell. Men in a panic were galloping every direction, trying to escape. Some still held on to their bolts of calico. The wagon train was a dreadful confusion of wild horses and howitzers. I was with the Sixth Kentucky regiment. We stood firm until General Morgan was out of the valley and after that anything more was useless. We held back the Yankee cavalry until the gunboats raked us with grape and then the men broke ranks. I swam the river and all but collided with a gunboat. General Morgan surrendered to a captain of militia; the captain granted him the most honorable terms but General Shackelford refused to allow them."

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A COMPLETE silence followed Wickliffe Sash's recital of the disaster to General Morgan's column in Ohio. His gaze fastened upon Charlotte. She was even love-

lier, more desirable, than he had remembered. Charlotte looked up at him; an uncertain smile touched her lips; but even in the dim light he could see that her eyes were troubled. "You must have something to eat," Mrs. Hazel said. She got up. "I will see what there is. Ham, probably, and cold chicken. Tomato preserves. Whisky would be better for you than Madeira." Mason said, "I will get that. It is locked up. Hidden." At last Wickliffe was alone with Charlotte Hazel. He went up to her and stood with his hands on her shoulders. She raised her head, and he realized that the trouble in her eyes, in her bearing, had deepened. Wickliffe disregarded that and caught her up, kissing her forehead and mouth. She was completely unresponsive; her face was bright with tears. "Wait, Wickliffe," she half cried; "you must listen to me. When you do you won't want to be near me at all. You will hate me." He stood back and regarded her with a questioning frown. He couldn't imagine what she was talking about. Wickliffe could not think what had come over Charlotte.

"Don't stare at me like that," she begged him. "Wickliffe, won't you sit down. It will make things easier. I have a lot to explain. You won't understand me but I must go on just the same." Wickliffe Sash brought a chair up to the sofa; he sat on it grave and attentive. She hates my beard, he told himself. I was an idiot not to have it cut off in Lexington. "Wickliffe," she began, "I am a bad girl. My heart is bad. Do you remember how we felt about people who went with the North, who deserted their land and people. Well, I am worse than that. I have deserted my land. I haven't been faithful to my people.

If you had been here perhaps it wouldn't have happened. I don't know about that. No one could, could they? Mother says it should not have happened because you weren't here. She says I failed in the simplest obligation of honor. Wickliffe, my mother will never have anything to do with me again. Not really. Compared with me John and Callam are both alive and at Greenland. I am dead and not them. Mason is a little better—at least he has been kind to me." She leaned forward desperately.

"Wickliffe, do you remember where we were when I first realized you loved me? Of course you do. It was at Mrs. Abel's, in Frankfort. The party just before the war started in Kentucky. You all rushed off to Lexington, to capture the Lincoln guns or keep them from being captured. It depended on whether you were for the North or the South. We walked away from everyone. Down to the river. Do you remember the roses and how the frogs croaked at us? Croaking frogs." Yes, he told her, it was all clear in his memory. Charlotte went on. "I was thirteen then. Thirteen, and I said I would love you all my life. I promised I would marry you when you came back from the war. Thirteen, Wickliffe. Won't you help me and admit that is very young for promises? Especially promises of love."

"I never thought of it as either young or old," he replied. "I loved you and wanted you and I knew I would always want you. I said to myself when the time comes we'll be married. That is all I thought. Naturally it couldn't happen then. By the river." He was filled with a mingled dread and impatience. "Perhaps you had bet-

ter make this clearer," he added. "There is a good deal of it I don't understand."

Charlotte drew in a long breath and, for a moment, shut her eyes. "Wickliffe, I can't marry you," she said at last. "I can't and the reason is I love someone else."

A profound silence closed about them in the thinly lighted formal room. Wickliffe's impatience vanished; it was dissolved in a sudden pain like a blow at his heart. Her words echoed in his mind—Wickliffe, I can't marry you. She could not marry him because she loved someone else. An angry resentment, the voice of his damaged masculine pride, spoke first. "How did you find out you loved someone else?" he demanded. "Didn't whoever it was know you were going to marry me?" Most of that, however, Wickliffe realized, she would not answer. Whoever it was she now loved must do that. "I don't know!" she exclaimed. "I can't tell you how any of it happened. I have to go on. It's Isham Rose; that won't mean anything to you; he was born in Irvine but he has been living in the North; and he is a captain in the Forty-fifth Kentucky regiment. You see, it couldn't be worse for any of us."

"That is Colonel Brown's brigade," Wickliffe said mechanically; "it is in the east now, with Burbridge's division, trying to destroy Morgan."

"Yes," Charlotte Hazel replied; "Isham is in the mountains. Somewhere between Louisa and Pound Gap. Do we have to talk about that? There is so much else nearer to us. Anyhow the regiment was in Irvine in April, Isham joined it there, and then he was moved to Lexington. I met him at Green New's house. I loved him right away,

Wickliffe. In a second. I wanted him to love me then. The first time we saw each other. At Green's. You have to understand that. How bad I was. It's the only excuse I could make. I mean the way it happened. I didn't stop to think. I couldn't. I didn't want to. I only wanted Isham. Wickliffe, I have to say it this way! Darling, you must hate me. If it had dragged on it couldn't have happened. Then I would have been even worse than I am. If possible. I asked Isham to come to Greenland. In spite of what mother would think and what Mason might say. Mother, naturally, refused to come down. To meet him at all. We stood on the porch, and, all at once, it was over. I had promised to marry you and I told Isham Rose he could have me whenever he wanted."

Wickliffe Sash, his eyes narrowed, gazed with a steady curiosity at Charlotte. She was lovelier by far than he had remembered. Lovelier and false. She had, engaged to marry him, offered herself, no—thrown herself, at another man. A Kentuckian fighting in a Union regiment against his own traditions and blood. A Kentuckian occupied at that moment in hunting down General Morgan. He forgot that, thinking more particularly of Charlotte and himself. Wickliffe wanted her more than ever, the pain at his heart was unbearable, and at the same time he completely understood that he would never possess her. Not now. He wanted her more than ever and yet he couldn't have her. Charlotte, who was so lovely, was a liar. She had betrayed him. He repeated, "Did this Captain Rose know you were engaged to me? That, I think, is important." It wasn't, he realized, it couldn't be, important to Charlotte now. She would say anything to

protect Isham Rose. Her answer was what he expected. "I saw him at Green New's almost the first day he was in Lexington," she replied; "he hadn't met anyone we know until then, and he came to Greenland the next afternoon. Wickliffe, he couldn't have heard about us. I told him myself. Later."

"What did he say?" Wickliffe Sash asked.

"Isham said he was sorry but it could not be helped. He would, he said, accept all the responsibilities of marrying me. I do know this, Wickliffe, he wants to see you." Wickliffe replied, "Naturally. He is with General Burbridge. They want to see everyone in Morgan's command. I don't imagine he will until later. Perhaps in Virginia. Captain Rose is still hunting for us near Pound Gap." He felt suddenly older by a very great deal. In a few minutes. In no time at all his life, all life, had grown darker, less desirable. Some more of its security had gone forever. This, he realized, in the terms of battle, was a serious wound. He would not recover from it. Wickliffe's pride, his sense of Charlotte's great failure, held his feelings resolutely checked. He was at least able to conduct himself with an appropriate dignity.

"There isn't much I can say," he proceeded, in a steady and cold voice. "You are quite released from your obligation to me. I asked a question about Captain Rose and I must accept your answer. That, I think, is the end of my responsibility where he is concerned. It hasn't appeared that he acted dishonorably." He fell abruptly silent. "I understand, Wickliffe," Charlotte said; "I am dishonorable and you are glad to know it now. Before it is too late."

He could see that Charlotte was immensely relieved. She was entirely free, now, to love and marry Isham Rose. Captain Rose of the Forty-fifth Kentucky regiment in the Federal army. He saw, too, that nothing else was important to her. Nothing he said, nothing her mother said, could reach or affect her. Charlotte's love shut everything else out from her. She was supremely indifferent to the rest of the world. It made her very hard, wholly unsympathetic. Charlotte was sorry for him, Wickliffe Sash, but no more. Mrs. Hazel came into the room and glanced rapidly from her daughter to him. She said nothing, however, except that some things were ready in the diningroom. Mrs. Hazel did add that Mason would sit with him; he wanted to hear all that Wickliffe knew about their army and the Confederacy. She had not finished speaking when there was a rapid passage of feet in the hall. A tall young man, without a beard, clad in the blue uniform of the Union army stood in the doorway. He spoke at once to Charlotte, overlooking the others.

"If it was wrong to appear so informally I am sorry," he told her. "I couldn't find any servants. Charlotte, I have no time at all, but I had to see you. For a moment. General Burbridge is here. Rather he'll be here any time now. The troops at Louisville have been notified. Morgan didn't expect us for days—." He stopped abruptly, at last conscious of Wickliffe Sash. Wickliffe moved forward with his revolver held point blank on the blue coat before him. "I suppose you are Captain Rose," he said. "Yes, I am Isham Rose," Rose replied. "You must be Wickliffe Sash." He was entirely cool. Apparently no revolver was

in sight. "I am interested in what you just told Charlotte," Wickliffe proceeded; "of course it is all a lie. Perhaps you had better sit down. On that chair by the wall. Sit down and fold your arms. Anything else would be a serious mistake." Isham Rose deliberately followed Wickliffe's directions. "General Burbridge," Wickliffe asserted, "won't be here, he can't be, for two or three days more."

"I am not in the habit of lying or waving revolvers before women," Rose answered. "You think no one but Morgan can make forced marches. Morgan thought that, apparently, and it will finish him. It might interest you, a cavalryman, to hear that we marched ninety miles in less than thirty hours. With artillery. You didn't reckon on that. It didn't occur to General Morgan that we would be in Mount Sterling as soon as he was."

"That is a lie," Wickliffe repeated. A feeling of dread settled over him. Rose, he knew, had been completely truthful. Burbridge was in the bluegrass, General Morgan did not know it, and the result of that ignorance, of his mistake, might very well be fatal. This was the night of the eighth. Morgan had planned to be in Lexington late on the ninth or, at worst, very early of the next day. He was moving west as rapidly as possible now. Burbridge, it was probable, hadn't come up with him yet. General Morgan must be informed of the Federal approach at once. "How long will it be necessary for me to sit here," Rose asked him. Wickliffe, the truth was, did not know. He had to leave immediately, and that necessity, complicated with the presence of Isham Rose, presented certain difficulties. Rose, he could see, would not agree with

a peaceable departure. Captain Rose had as much interest in delaying him as he had in hurrying away to warn his commander. Wickliffe gazed doubtfully at Charlotte and Mrs. Hazel. Charlotte had sunk back on the sofa where she had been sitting; her hands were tightly clasped; her face was pinched with terror. Mrs. Hazel was standing pale and composed. It was a desperate situation for all of them. Wickliffe said to himself, I will have to kill him. I must get off. There is no other way to do that. He couldn't, he discovered, coldly shoot Isham Rose before Charlotte and her mother. Mason Hazel came into the room. He had stopped between Wickliffe and Rose and he quickly moved aside.

"Mason," Wickliffe Sash said, "I want you to take Charlotte and your mother away. They had better go upstairs. Something very painful has happened." Mason Hazel went up to his mother and gently took her arm. "Come, mother," he addressed her; "Charlotte, I want you to be with her. Please." Charlotte stood up insecurely. "Before you go," Isham Rose interrupted them, "I ought to explain a difficulty in this situation. Captain Sash, who has thought of nothing but his duty, has missed it. I am not, I hope you will realize, speaking for myself. It is clear Sash intends to kill me. That is proper. At the same time—and my orderly is outside with the horses—if I am shot to death here, in Greenland, the Provost Marshal's guard will burn down the house. They will retaliate on Mr. Hazel and send Mrs. Hazel and Charlotte to prisons in the North. If they are fortunate. I want to prevent that if it's possible."

All Rose had said was, Wickliffe Sash saw again, clearly

true. If, as he would be forced to do, he left Rose shot at Greenland an example would be made of the Hazels that even in imagination he could not face. Mrs. Hazel spoke in a firm voice. "You cannot listen to him, Wickliffe. General Morgan must be reached. We are of no importance here. Not compared with that. John and Callam have met their responsibility and Mason won't hesitate. Charlotte and I will contrive to live through it." Charlotte rose with an exclamation of protest. Wickliffe was afraid that, in her panic, she would throw herself upon him. Mason caught her arm. He held her with an arm about her waist. "Come, Charlotte," Mrs. Hazel said with immense dignity, "we will leave the gentlemen." They went, Charlotte still restrained by her brother, leaving Wickliffe faced with his regrettable situation.

"You will be too late," Isham Rose warned him. "Burbridge must overtake your column tonight. Greenland will be sacrificed for nothing."

Wickliffe Sash made no immediate answer. He ought to kill Rose where he sat, without a moment's hesitation, and get away. That was his duty. He was, he found, unable to follow it. His revolver was pointed directly and steadily at Isham Rose. He could not force himself to pull the trigger. God, the Provost Marshal might very easily hang all three of the Hazels, Charlotte and Mrs. Hazel and Mason. But he might shoot Rose and then, with luck, kill the orderly and leave them for Mason to dispose of. Mason could hide the bodies in an old well; there was a chance they would not be found. He might even drive the horses off into the night. It was too

dangerous, he decided; there were still servants, negroes, in the place; and they would hear the shots. It was even possible to kill Rose and the orderly with the heavy knife Wickliffe carried at his belt. The question of the blood occurred to him. A man, Wickliffe well knew, held an amazing lot of it. No, Mason Hazel, alone, could not accomplish so much before light. There was one other, a last, possibility.

"I understand," he proceeded, "that you are engaged to Charlotte Hazel. When that occurred she was promised to me. Charlotte told me you acted innocently. You didn't know she was not free. I believed her then, but now, since I have seen you, I'm not so sure about it. In other words, there may be the material of a difference between us. I am inclined to think you have done me a serious wrong."

"I wondered if that would come up," Isham Rose replied. "It is very reasonable. If you will agree to it I'll write a note we can both sign and give it to the orderly. I will explain the circumstances to him and let him attend me and Mason can stand with you."

Wickliffe put his pistol back in its holster. "Thank you," he said simply. Mason returned to the drawing-room. "Captain Rose and myself have arranged a meeting," Wickliffe explained. "He wishes to write a note first." Mason took Isham Rose across the hall to a desk. An overwhelming realization took possession of Wickliffe—he had no right to risk his life in a duel. He had, now, no private or personal honor. Only one thing was important and that was the danger concentrating about General Morgan. He went quickly to a long side window,

open upon the lawn, and dropped lightly into the night outside. Wickliffe Sash quickly and noiselessly unfastened his horse from the rack by the slave quarters.

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THE ugly black horse, he discovered, galloping through the night, had an extraordinary measure of endurance. The animal showed hardly a sign of weariness. Wickliffe didn't know how far he would be forced to ride—General Morgan was at Mount Sterling, the troops stationed there would create no serious difficulty, and when the town was taken he would move with the greatest possible rapidity toward Lexington. Probably he'd encounter the column between Aaron's run and Stoner creek. He could not believe that Burbridge had overtaken General Morgan. Probably, Wickliffe told himself, that will happen tomorrow and there will be a battle. Morgan will attack where the Federal line is weakest and escape again. He had always escaped, Wickliffe realized. The Yankees could never hold General Morgan. His thoughts returned to Greenland, to Charlotte and Isham Rose. His love for Charlotte was dead. That part of him was dead. Charlotte Hazel had been unfaithful. Not so much to him as to herself. Charlotte had broken her word.

In a wholly different sense he had broken his word to Captain Rose. He had agreed to meet Rose in a duel and then run away. He wondered uncomfortably what Rose said, what Mrs. Hazel thought, when they discovered he had gone? Charlotte would be relieved. There was, however, no doubt in Wickliffe Sash's mind about the

propriety of his course. It didn't matter what anyone thought of him. If I do see Rose later, he told himself, I can offer him all the satisfaction he will require. Isham Rose, the truth was, had behaved very well indeed; he was almost contemptuous in his courage. His attitude toward Greenland had been admirable—Wickliffe could see that Isham Rose was a good soldier. I hope I meet him again, he reflected. I owe him something.

Earlier memories of Charlotte and his family filled his mind: he had never loved, he had never thought of, another girl. It had begun when he was eighteen and Charlotte nine. They had, he considered, always belonged to each other. Now she was gone his life seemed strange and empty. Without, except for the South, any purpose. It would be stranger, emptier, when the war was over. It must be over some day. The South would lose everything. No, a miracle, General Lee, would save it. Europe would come to the assistance of the Confederacy. The North must grow tired of pouring men and supplies into the consuming flames of Southern resistance. There was a faint trace of morning in the east, trees and fences were easily visible, lights showed in farmhouse windows. A sudden freshness was perceptible, a delightful fragrant coolness touched Wickliffe Sash's cheeks. The east was rosecolored, the zenith tenderly azure. The grass sparkled with crystal dew. The morning was innocent and pure, gay with flowers and musical with little pastoral sounds; lambs were white on the blue-green meadows, and a colt was gracefully clumsy.

A feeling of melancholy, of longing for old tranquillity,

possessed Wickliffe. He wanted to be very young again, shooting gray squirrels in the woods of Calydon on a morning exactly like this. Lost in thought, in memories, he rode directly into the forward videttes of General Morgan's column. "Burbridge is in the bluegrass," he informed them, hurrying by. It seemed to Wickliffe Sash that he was followed by a scoffing and weary laugh. He pulled the horse up sharply and delivered his intelligence to General Morgan. The General thanked him. "I am indebted to you, Captain Sash. I can see you have ridden hard. You have done well. We haven't been so fortunate." Wickliffe Sash asked, "Shall I transmit any orders concerning General Burbridge's advanced position to my battalion?"

"Unfortunately that is not necessary," Morgan replied; "they know it already." Wickliffe saluted and dropped to the rear of the column. He was too late. "Where is Lieutenant Brenno?" he asked a sergeant riding at the head of some men familiar to him. "He is dead, sir," the sergeant replied. "Why isn't Mr. Liman at the company head?" Wickliffe continued. "Mr. Liman is dead too," he was informed. "Sergeant Shuck is killed and Thomas Haskins and Moses Henry. All the sergeants. And Ambrose Huffman. I was corporal Martin Grider. We were cut to pieces last night, just before three o'clock, holding the rear guard." Wickliffe joined the officers riding with Colonel Martin at the head of the brigade. Martin's head was bandaged and the wrapping was bright with fresh blood; he was grimly silent; he would speak, Wickliffe saw, to no one. Lieutenant-Colonel Brent, however, was talking continuously, in a tone of suppressed

resentment, to Major Diamond. "No one knew Burbridge was in a hundred miles of us," he protested. "General Morgan had no idea of it. Colonel Martin went regularly to bed in a house back from the command. There wasn't a word of danger from our direction. Not a whisper of it or a thought. I sent my picket out, according to orders, and had guards along the road." Major Diamond nodded shortly and unsympathetically; he left Brent and rode beside Wickliffe Sash.

"For God's sake, George," Wickliffe demanded, "tell me what happened. I found out, in Lexington, that Burbridge was close behind us. I rode all night, on a horse that had wings, but it seems without accomplishing anything." Major Diamond was bitter. "Brent swears he sent a picket far enough down the road. He didn't. I heard Colonel Martin tell him to post a guard a mile back of the camp. I doubt if it was a hundred yards away. He had between forty and fifty men of our First battalion on rear guard duty. Well, Burbridge surprised them. The Federal cavalry was in the camp before anyone, hardly, was awake; they shot the men and cut them down lying around their fires. Wickliffe, they never had a chance. Martin was sleeping in a farmhouse and he rode through the whole Union force to reach his command. By that time the Yankees had occupied Mount Sterling again—we had captured it once—and when we were forced to retreat we had to cut our way through the town. You know what that is like—muskets in every window and guns with grape at the cross streets.

"We got through it and met Giltner about two miles further on; Martin persuaded him to go back and attack

again; and it was agreed for Giltner to advance on the front of Mount Sterling while Martin assaulted in the rear. It turned out to be another of those damned occasions when we ran out of cartridges. A draw. We withdrew and the Federal troops were so badly shot up they couldn't follow us. We lost fourteen commissioned officers and forty men, eighty were left badly wounded in Mount Sterling, a hundred more were captured." Wickliffe was silent; it was evident that General Morgan had suffered a serious, perhaps a fatal, defeat. "This time," Diamond asserted, "we are finished. At last. Morgan's column. Most of us now, Wickliffe, will stay in Kentucky. Where we were born. Where we belong. The bluegrass. We won't care if the Yankees own it or not. States rights and the negroes won't bother us. The dark and bloody ground is bloody and dark again. Worse than ever. I suppose peace will come to Kentucky some day; after us; we have had nothing but war so far."

"I wouldn't know what to do if the world turned peaceful," Wickliffe Sash admitted. "It seems to me I've been riding, and on foot, in column forever. Fighting and retreating. The retreat a little harder every time. Before that, all my life, this damned war was kept up. Political or actually. If I did go home it wouldn't be there. Not with everyone I knew and cared for pretty well killed. My brothers are dead, my father will never recover from a sabre cut, my mother, who was so gay and young, is an old woman. My cousins, who were children with me, have murdered each other by now. Elisha Abel is missing. All three of the News are dead. Callam and John Hazel are gone and Charlotte is gone too." He

didn't continue. Wickliffe rode with his head down, a snaffle rein loose in his hand.

The column came in sight of Lexington, there was a slight engagement, scattered shots from sheltered positions, and General Morgan rode into the city. Wickliffe helped to burn the Union depot and stables, he shifted his saddle to a fresh horse, and had a bath at the Phoenix Hotel. What was left of the Third brigade—the men were all mounted now—was consolidated with their original battalions in the First and Second. The command hurried on toward Georgetown; Wickliffe Sash was detached in a demonstration against Frankfort.

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He was, so far as it could be discovered, successful; his detail rode again all night and overtook the main body outside Cynthiana. Wickliffe's position was irregular, he had no company; he served as temporary aide to Colonel Martin. There was little time for rigid military alignment. It was the eleventh of June. A sharp fight followed around the Union garrison; after an hour it surrendered; Wickliffe, who had charge of the prisoners, roughly counted four hundred Federal soldiers. He paroled them upon his own responsibility, and then he was occupied with a squad of men attempting to put out a fire that had started among the small frame dwellings of the town. General Morgan stopped to direct them. He was, Wickliffe recognized, in a state of suppressed anger! Morgan was especially sharp about all damage or losses that might be blamed on his troops. He bitterly resented the charges in

the Union papers that he was no better than a partisan raider who carried destruction into his own state.

The fight had scarcely ended in Cynthiana when there was a renewed rattle of shots on the outskirts: a supporting force of Union cavalry under General Hobson had arrived. Morgan, attended by Wickliffe Sash, detached Major Cassel's battalion from the occupation of the fortifications, attacking Hobson in the rear. Wickliffe's horse was shot in the muzzle and became unmanageable. He was half thrown to the ground and shot a Federal officer who was riding over him. He was kicked by a horse, lightly it was fortunate, but his left trouser was torn off to his boot. A constant rill of blood ran down that leg. There was a sharp blow at his shoulder; it whirled him about; he had been shot; an arm hung useless at his side. A glitter of steel, a sabre, swept by his eyes. It was the first thing, Wickliffe thought, that had missed him. He caught a Union major by the belt and dragged him down; the major clubbed him on the head with his pistol butt. One, two crashing blows. Wickliffe drove his knife into the officer's back.

They fell together; Wickliffe Sash lost consciousness; he came to almost at once and found that General Hobson had been captured and his cavalry routed. He walked swaying toward Colonel Giltner and an orderly gave him a horse. The orderly wiped the blood out of Wickliffe's eyes and helped him into the saddle. General Morgan had left and a bugle blew urgently for assembly in Cynthiana. Wickliffe Sash awkwardly loaded his revolver with one hand; he held it with his knee against the saddle. His head hurt outrageously and there was a grinding pain in his

hip but the wound in his shoulder didn't bother him. Giltner said, "Captain Sash, I believe you are almost home. It is folly for you to stay with the column. Will you accept my order to leave the field?"

"Thank you, Colonel Giltner," Wickliffe replied. He continued to ride beside his superior. Nothing more was said about his retirement from action. They came upon General Morgan in the center of the town. The Confederates were emptying the military depot and destroying the stores. General Hobson was mounted at Morgan's side. He left, shortly, under the escort of Captain Morgan and two other officers for Cincinnati. Wickliffe sat on the edge of a porch. The house was deserted. It was very hot. His head had stopped bleeding but the pain continued. Hell, it increased. He didn't understand how it could but it did. He ought to see a surgeon. The effort to move, to either walk or ride, was more than he could undertake. Instead he was actively sick. Then he fell asleep. When Wickliffe woke up the dusk had gathered in Cynthiana. He was hungry and hobbled into the house where he found the end of a ham and a kettle of vegetable soup. It would be splendid to have some bread, he thought. Bread, bread, bread, he repeated, looking for it. There was none. He consumed the cold soup.

Waves of increasing weakness swept over him. He lay down on a hard couch and slept and woke up, slept and woke up. Something was broken in his hip. Wickliffe had to lie on the other side, and that made it necessary for him to change the position of his revolver. An enormous undertaking. He would get up in a little and rejoin his command. General Morgan would move westward

very early in the morning. A battle set up between his will and his injured body. I must go back to the column, he told himself; intolerable pain threatened to defeat that resolution. At last he forced himself to move. Wickliffe sat up and then slowly made his way to the porch. His horse was tied to a porch pillar. He walked beside the animal holding on to the rein and the saddle. The morning once more opened like the petals of a flower, a rose, about him. Wickliffe told himself that he felt better. He managed, at a mounting block, to get on his horse.

The two brigades were gathering in the center of the town. General Morgan addressed their staffs. "We have less than twelve hundred available men," he asserted: "the rest, who are not killed, are guarding prisoners and on the wagon train. Two details are still tearing up the tracks of the Kentucky Central Railroad. We will retreat at once. Rapid as possible. By the Augusta road. The entire command will move in column with a mounted reserve to cover the rear." Disaster immediately followed. Giltner was cut off and forced to retreat towards Leesburg. He made an effort to form his men, against an overwhelming force, in line of battle. "Where is Colonel Smith?" he cried at Wickliffe. Lieutenant Andrews, attached to Smith, rode up to them. "We will be here at once," he shouted above the volleying of Enfield rifles. Colonel Smith's brigade arrived; it drove the Union advance back; but a massed attack broke through Colonel Bowles's position. It's over now, Wickliffe Sash told himself. He was behind a stone wall, dismounted, with what remained of Bowles's forces.

They were driven from that cover. Wickliffe saw

Major Kirkpatrick carried from the field. He retreated slowly, with Smith's command, toward Cynthiana, and found that they were surrounded by Burbridge's army with the Licking river at one side. Colonel Smith led his men through the river, they met a body of cavalry on the opposite bank and, scattering it, they vanished from Wickliffe Sash's view. He couldn't mount. He was helpless to follow them. Well, the war for him was done. He walked and rested, leaned against trees or fences or walls. Every time he stopped it was more difficult to proceed. Federal soldiers rode by ignoring him. He scarcely moved out of the horses' way. An officer approached him more slowly. He stopped. "I am glad it is you," Wickliffe said. It was Captain Isham Rose. He dismounted. "Let me help you," Rose said. "No," Wickliffe Sash replied. "Don't be stubborn," Captain Rose begged him; "you are badly hurt." Wickliffe repeated, "No, it is nothing. I am in your debt." The question of debt, Isham Rose told him, they could settle later.

"No," Wickliffe said.

They stood by a house with a side yard where the wall was bright with tall hollyhocks flowering in the sun. The air was sweet with the perfume of cinnamon roses. "My right hand is still good," he asserted. He walked back into the side yard followed by the man Charlotte Hazel had planned to marry. "I protest against all of this," Rose insisted. Wickliffe Sash said, "I challenged you originally. Are you satisfied with navy revolvers at ten paces?" They took their positions on a narrow walk of planks. "Will you agree to turn and fire?" Wickliffe further asked. Isham Rose replied that he would agree

to turn and fire. Wickliffe stood with his back to him. The side yard ended in a high fence that badly needed paint. "Turn!" he cried. He wheeled and let drop his revolver. There was a stunning sound like a bolt of thunder. The sun vanished in a pall of blackness. He heard, very far away, a voice. "In God's name," it begged him, "why did you hold your fire?" He replied thinly out of the changing elements of dissolution. "I ran from my privilege to it."

The darkness rolled back—Wickliffe Sash was in the bluegrass, a wide pastoral land where horses grazed slowly with flowing manes and tails and Red Devon cattle, burnished by the sun, were like animals in copper. The woodland pastures were cool and gracious with shade. The great doors at Calydon stood open. His brothers called to him in their play. Nothingness gently enfolded him.

Major Elisha Abel and Polk Ewing, military aide to Governor Johnson of Tennessee, sat together under the shed of a cotton gin-house behind the Union earthworks outside Franklin and gazed with approval at the day about them. The weather—at the very end of November—was beautifully warm; the fields were veiled in a diffused sunlight; the Columbia turnpike vanished in a golden haze. "What is Nashville like now?" Elisha demanded; "I haven't been in it long enough to find out for two years. Not since Buell turned his army over to Rosecrans. September of 1862. When we were held at Lebanon for the winter. The Twelfth Kentucky infantry has had all the chances in the world to follow the path of glory. I'd like a change. Fiddles instead of drums and girls, very pretty girls, Ewing, in drawingrooms. The drawingrooms are important." Polk Ewing had a slow

skeptical voice. "You had better wait for the fall of Richmond," he replied; "or go back to Kentucky. Society in Nashville is a little difficult just at present.

"The reason won't entirely surprise you—the drawing-rooms and very pretty girls are mostly on the side of the South. Mostly. You couldn't hope to be a success with them. There are Union houses in Nashville, of course. Ours is one. I have already asked you to stay there. Neill Brown, with all his sons in the Confederate army, is for the North; the Polks are reasonable; Campbell and Baillie Peyton support Mr. Lincoln's government. But what you mean, what you are after, is all closed to you. There really isn't any society left. The occupation brought that to an end. Andy Johnson's Federal oath killed it. The Mayor and the city aldermen refused to take it, and the Mayor was arrested for treason. Andy appointed a whole new council. He put the editor of the Nashville Banner in prison and locked up Mr. Carter, the president of the Union Bank, with his cashier, John Herriford, and sent Turner Foster, who had just been elected Judge of the Circuit Court, to the penitentiary. Then he confiscated the properties of The Nashville Republican, the Union and American, the Gazette and the Methodist Publishing House. Soon afterwards he suppressed the Baptist Publishing House and a paper called The Patriot.

"The Governor arrested six of the leading ministers in Nashville; they refused to take his oath and he put five of them in prison—until they could be sent out of the state—and paroled one who was sick. He got rid of Doctor Ford, Elliott, the principal of the Female Academy, and the superintendent of the Lunatic Asylum at

the same time. No, you won't be very gay in Nashville. There are parties, of course, but very simple and not for majors in the Federal army. Linda, she is my sister, goes to them; no one is unpleasant to Linda; I see any number of charmers and Confederates with her; but they are no more than polite to me. The prettiest girl, naturally, is the worst. Eva Gallatin. We may lick the South but we'll never overcome her. Abel, I swear to you she is the loveliest creature alive." Elisha Abel said negligently, "I think I will marry her." Polk Ewing laughed at him.

"You might, perhaps, marry my aunt, the relic of the late President of the United States, who thinks the world came to an end with John Quincy Adams, or steal Varina from Jefferson Davis, but you will have no luck with Eva." Elisha went on. "I must see if I agree with you. If I do I'll give her one of the buttons from my sleeve and come back when the war is over." Ewing was almost annoyed. "You think this is Kentucky," he asserted; "Kentucky is a Union state at heart. Tennessee isn't. It is part of the Confederacy. Remember we are only occupying it. We haven't won Tennessee by the hell of a sight. You will never win Eva Gallatin," he repeated. "I haven't heard a word about yourself," Polk Ewing continued. "You may want a change, less glory, but I can't get out of Nashville. Nothing has happened there since Morgan's raid in 1862." He had, Elisha Abel replied, been on the march for months. For years. Centuries. "After Spring Mill, and that was early in the war, we moved south of the Cumberland to Clio and were mustered into the United States army. Then we marched back through Bardstown to Louisville. From Louisville

we went down the Ohio and up the Cumberland river again to Tennessee, with Buell's army trains. The regiment got to Pittsburg Landing three days late and went on to Corinth. When Beauregard withdrew from there we advanced, still with Buell, to Chattanooga. We camped at Tuscumbia, in Alabama, and then marched back three hundred miles to Louisville. It was September again.

"We were with the reserve regiments at the battle of Perryville; General Buell returned to Tennessee; and that was the winter we spent at Lebanon. In April, 1863, we went to Bowling Green. On post duty. Burnside was given command of the department and the regiment was ordered to Camp Nelson." Elisha Abel interrupted his recital. He gazed attentively across the fields to the farther gentle wooded hills. "I thought I saw Hood's soldiers," he said; "in formation. I am certain there were flags." He stood up. Two brigades of Union infantry, General Wagner's troops, occupied a solitary advanced position; as Elisha studied them, frowning, he saw an officer galloping back to the main command. "If General Hood is in motion Wagner ought to be recalled," he went on. "He won't last a minute where he is. His men will be in everybody's way."

Elisha Abel looked critically over the line of Federal defenses. They had been hurriedly thrown up that morning; the earthworks were slight but, Elisha told himself, they were well situated. His regiment of General Reilly's brigade was posted at the rear of the Union position; part of a small reserve of three regiments; and there it had dug an entrenchment of its own. On his right the

Columbia turnpike led toward the enemy; the left was protected by a thick Osage orange hedge and the Harpeth river. Nashville was a night's march behind him. Everyone in his command, Elisha Abel saw, was intent upon the sunny indefinite distance that hid the immediate purpose of General Hood. "We will have them on us any time now," he remarked calmly to Polk Ewing. "It ought to be pretty stiff. If Hood isn't successful the South will lose Tennessee." That, Ewing added, would mean the end of the Confederacy. "Two companies in the regiment have Colt revolving rifles," Elisha Abel explained. "They are new and I'm curious about them." He resumed his seat under the gin-house shed and continued the light description of his late marches.

"General Burnside advanced on Tennessee again and we went with him. We stayed almost a day in Knoxville and then moved up to Virginia. There was some fighting, skirmishes, but we were soon back in Knoxville. At least there was a battle there. This time with Longstreet. The Twelfth Kentucky infantry held Temperance Hill. Grant won at Mission Ridge, Sherman came to our relief, Longstreet retreated and we followed him. There was a fight at Bean's Station and once more we camped for the winter. Strawberry Plains. That January, 1864, was the coldest anyone remembered. Our shoes were worn out, they were always worn out, and we had no overcoats. In spite of that—we loved marching so much—the regiment reenlisted in the veteran army. We crossed the mountains again to Louisville. In April we were on the march—Somerset, Crab Orchard, Danville and Lebanon back to Chattanooga. We went part of the way, for a change,

on the top of a freight train. Then, by God, we were ordered to join Sherman at Pumpkin Vine creek.

"There was an engagement at Burnt Hickory, we were attached to Schofield's corps, and crossed the Chattahooche river in canvas pontoon boats. Under fire. We were supposed to take an artillery position by direct assault. George Hill was killed at Peach Tree creek. When Sherman captured Atlanta we went into camp, at Decatur, but we were soon moved. Christ, yes! We returned to Nashville and marched to Pulaski." Polk Ewing said, "I am sorry to interrupt you. There is General Hood."

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The Confederate army, in line of battle, was moving deliberately forward across the autumn fields. It reached, dressed on the center, from the trees along the river bank far to the right; the files of muskets gleamed in the sun; the regimental flags were gay. Sharp orders sounded in the Union earthworks; they swept, like a lighted train of gunpowder, in a diminishing explosion down the length of the Federal position. Elisha Abel's orderly, who had been holding their horses inside the turnpike fence, brought them up. "Good-bye," Polk Ewing said, mounting. "Be lucky. I must report to General Schofield. You will find me with Andy at the Capitol," he cried, riding away. Elisha proceeded to where Colonel Rousseau was established with his staff. General Reilly's two other regiments, in the front line of entrenchments, were supported by six guns. A part of Strickland's brigade, across the turnpike on Elisha Abel's right, was new and

inexperienced. It had joined the army only two days before. Elisha watched Wagner's two lonely brigades with a painful interest. God damn it, Schofield had no business to leave them, without protection or chance of assistance, exposed to Hood's whole force! It was, he realized, too late for General Wagner to fall back. Any effort to retreat now would at once degenerate into a panic. The Southern line advanced more rapidly. Two guns, in a forward works, fired on it. They were dragged back at a gallop to the main defenses. A thin volley from the skirmish line made an unimportant rattle.

Wagner is gone, Elisha said to himself bitterly. The rebel yell rose shrill and high above the crash of arms. The rebel army swept about the two Union brigades and there was a momentary confusion of fighting. The center of the Confederate line hesitated, the two flanks rushed forward, and then the whole body of the enemy again advanced. The struggle with the remnants of Wagner's command continued. It moved on in a continuous turmoil. A further misfortune was instantly plain to Elisha—the guns of his brigade could not fire into the confused mass of Northern and Southern soldiers. The charge, where it was bearing down on General Reilly's line, was unchecked. Elisha Abel was cold and composed. He had come to be like that facing battle; when it progressed, he knew, he changed.

A mass of men swept up to the Federal earthworks; Wagner's men were still fighting. The rending fire of cannon and musketry rose in a great sustained volume; through it Elisha could hear the commands and cries and screams of men. The enemy rushed over the

entrenchments; the combat became a furious hand to hand encounter. A bullet struck a man beside him in the stomach; he fell twisting and bloody and, dismounting, Elisha picked up his Colt rifle. The soldier died, digging with his fingers into the ground, and Elisha secured his cartridge belt. He sent his horse with a private to the rear. Thomas Speed, Rousseau's adjutant, shouted at him. "That God damned new Ohio regiment has broken." It was true. The Confederates were pouring through an opening in the defense beyond the Columbia turnpike. The whole left of the Union line was wavering. The guns on the turnpike were abandoned. The earthworks there were deserted. A disorderly flight began into Franklin.

"They'll take us on the flank," Elisha told Speed. He saw Colonel Opdyke advancing with his brigade from beside a house that belonged to a family named Carter. They formed across the breach in the works. His own regiment was thrown forward. Elisha Abel lost his coldness. The Colt revolving rifle, he found, was splendid; he emptied it and loaded and emptied it again. He clearly saw the individuals he killed. Elisha clubbed a man to death cutting at him with a knife. He fired again and again. The Confederates he shot were so near to him they were burned by the discharges that struck them. A bullet swept away his cap; bullets pierced his sleeves; sabres swung at him; he was touched by nothing. Rousseau stopped beside him. "I think we are checking them," the Colonel said. "Kentucky is holding its ground. The Fourth corps is firm." A surge of battle enveloped them. Dead men were flung across Elisha Abel's feet. A wounded soldier caught desperately at him, shooting

upward with a primitive and clumsy revolver. Elisha kicked him in the head. He fired all the loads of the rifle into him. Part of the Union force that had retreated was re-formed. They returned to the struggle. Colonel Opdyke's horse was killed and, at the head of his brigade, he fought on foot.

A Confederate general rode handsomely over the defenses and caught hold of the colors of an Ohio regiment. The Ohio colonel, in an effort equally handsome, tried to save him. It was useless—the color guard killed him in a storm of lead. Elisha saw Cleburne, Hood's most distinguished general, near the earthworks. He fell under a roar of oblique fire from the left. Elisha Abel was again beside Rousseau. "General Cleburne was killed," he informed his superior. "I saw them lose another general inside the works." It was Adams, Colonel Rousseau replied. "John Adams. Young's division of Stewart's corps." The fighting increased in severity around the gin-house. There was a ceaseless drumming of bullets hitting it. The bullets that struck men made a different, a duller, sound.

General Reilly's guns were, at last, in action. The earthworks were heaped with men rigid in the agony of violent death, and with firearms. Confederate battle flags lay across the parapet. There wasn't a stir of air, and the thick smoke settled on the field of battle. It became impossible to see anyone, anything, at even a short distance. The obscurity was torn with firing and lurid with stabbing flames. Elisha could not decide what, generally, was happening. The passion, the evil of combat, left him. He was cold and composed and weary. He shot the last

charge in the Colt rifle into the vague body of a Confederate soldier that appeared out of the smoke and melted away. It grew darker, the short November afternoon was almost done, and, dropping the rifle, Elisha moved back in search of his orderly. Moses Gamblin, his negro servant, was with the horses. Moses clearly showed his relief. He had not been exactly apprehensible, he explained; everybody knew General Hood couldn't count on killing Major Abel; but a chance shot might take him when he, Moses, was not around. He spoke, more obscurely, of the protection afforded by a little snakedust and a buzzard's feather.

The musket and gun fire died away reluctant and sullen. The battle, Elisha realized, was over. Hood hadn't been successful. That, Polk Ewing had asserted, meant the end of the war. The pall of smoke clung to the earth. He heard the voice of John Travis, captain of B company in the Twelfth Kentucky infantry, calling together his men. Travis appeared out of the gloom. "We have eight killed, fourteen wounded and five missing," he reported. An officer of General Reilly's staff rode up. "We are to fall back on Nashville," he told Elisha Abel; "join Thomas there. It is his opinion General Hood will renew battle." Stretchers appeared. An ambulance stopped near Elisha. It was filled immediately. Men spoke in their normal voices. Fires were lighted. The aroma of coffee was perceptible. A sharp disdain for all living, a hatred of reality, possessed Elisha Abel. He was conscious of a salt taste like blood. His eyes burned from the sulphurous fumes of burning gunpowder. A vague physical sickness swept over him.

Moses Gamblin, with a pot of black coffee, sugar and a tin cup found him. Elisha sat on the bank of the Columbia turnpike. The free comments of men in the ranks rose about him. The Confederate troops were well spoken of. The rebels were razorback hogs for fighting. Their corps commanders won a large measure of praise. Six generals had been killed around the Franklin earthworks. Hell, it weren't nothing to slaughter a Southern general. They were thick as blackberries in Woodford county. God, them officers led their men! They didn't stay on no hill across the river. Young, too. One general, blowed right up in the air, scarcely had a beard to him. Jeb Stuart, it was related, had the finest beard in the rebel army. An individual who had seen General Forrest's beard contested this. It was, he said, so big and froze solid with the blood of men he had killed that it turned bullets. The voices faded from Elisha's hearing. He fell asleep and woke again almost instantly. He hoped that Polk Ewing had not been killed—he wanted to see Eva Gallatin.

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General Reilly's brigade, the Twelfth Kentucky infantry, reached Brentwood, outside Nashville, before morning. Elisha Abel had been continuously engaged for three days and nights. A temporary base was established in a house on the Franklin turnpike, and he slept there until late afternoon. When he woke Moses Gamblin had a bath, fresh details of dress, waiting for him. He had, Moses explained, rode very comfortable along with the army on a gun caisson. Elisha Abel shaved. That, and

supper with the staff officers of his own regiment and of the Sixteenth Kentucky infantry, completely restored his energy of being. There was a great deal of news and champagne. Hood was advancing toward Nashville. He would arrive not later than tomorrow. General Thomas had assembled all the troops available and they were the reverse of impressive: a part of Sherman's army, perhaps five thousand men, had arrived from Chattanooga too late to join their proper commands. They were attached to Steedman, who was holding the extreme Union left at the Cumberland river. A. T. Smith had brought his veterans from Missouri. Cooper's brigade, hurrying to Nashville, barely escaped capture. Some colored troops reported from a post near Johnsonville.

There was, the gathering agreed, no unity in General Thomas's army. It wasn't, actually, an army but a doubtful assemblage of troops. They had no equipment—most of the cavalry was without mounts, there were no mules or pontoons. General Schofield appeared. He recognized Elisha and complimented him upon the behavior of his battalion. He had just left General Thomas. A message had arrived from Grant, at City Point, in Virginia, urging immediate action. It seemed to Schofield that yesterday was immediate enough. The Twelfth Kentucky infantry was moved back to Fort Negley; it was made part of the Twenty-third corps under General Couch; and, relieved of immediate duty, Elisha went into Nashville to find Polk Ewing. The city had a harassed and neglected appearance; it was filled with Federal soldiers, military hospitals and quartermaster's depots, great wooden buildings often a square in extent. The prin-

cipal dwellings—Elisha was on High Street—had been converted into army headquarters; doors stood open for endless arriving and departing aides and messengers; the gardens were littered with refuse and trampled, occupied, by lounging details of soldiers. The sidewalks were broken and the avenues of trees, their bark eaten by the countless horses tied to them, were forlorn and dying.

The capitol, an impressively situated, classical building of gray stone with a portico and high columns, a central tower and cupola, was completely fortified by earthworks and ramparts of cotton bales. Polk Ewing explained that it was now called Fort Johnson. They were standing on the portico gazing out over Nashville and the winding course of the Cumberland river. The day was overcast and cold. "You will, of course, stay with us," Ewing proceeded. "We are only a little way from here on Cedar Street. You can reach your men in no time. I'll see you get any orders for your corps before they reach Couch." Elisha, returning to his command, secured official approval of Polk Ewing's invitation; then, with Moses and his scant baggage, he moved to Cedar Street.

The Ewings lived in a tall narrow brick dwelling that had, on the left, an open gallery supported at each floor by ornate ironwork. A staircase so long that it resembled a study in perspective mounted from a dark lower hall, and Polk Ewing led Elisha up to his room. It was a big solemn bedchamber with solemn heavy furniture; a high-posted bed was hung with drapery printed with scenes from a classical land. "Now," Elisha said cheerfully, "where is this Eva Gallatin?" Ewing begged him not to be foolish. "You will see her. Linda will arrange that. But

you can only look, Abel. You mustn't touch. In spite of her loveliness Eva is made of metal. Iron and ice and fire. I give you my word she would like nothing better than to see you dead in one of the drawingrooms you are so particular about. Nashville is dangerous. If you annoyed Eva Gallatin the Union might easily lose a promising major from Kentucky. There are twenty men here who would attend to that."

"I'll see first if I agree with you about the beauty of this excellent creature," Elisha repeated. "That will give me plenty of time to cut another button off my sleeve. You are too damned romantic about women. You can listen to me with profit. For example, if Eva Gallatin begins by hating me she couldn't possibly throw herself away quicker. If she is already in love, or just indifferent, it might be awkward." She was in love with the Confederacy, Polk Ewing insisted. "There is nothing more to be said," Elisha assured him; "when she can't bear to think of me, or even hear my name, I'll let her know I am considering her favorably and the South will lose its chiefest ornament."

"I have been sorry for you," Polk Ewing explained; "I had a feeling of remorse. That has left me. I am going to see that you meet with this calamity. It won't be necessary for anyone to kill you. You will kill yourself. Supper is at eight."

Elisha Abel dressed slowly and thought about Eva Gallatin. Probably Polk had exaggerated her good looks. He liked difficult girls. Before the war, in Kentucky, he had liked none. A sudden realization came to Elisha of the tremendous change worked in him by the three past

years. By the war. It was, on the whole, beneficial. It had taken him away from physical luxury, from the arbitrary and misleading power of money, and hardened his mind and body. He had, naturally, lost all terror of death. He thought, it was true, far less of life, but then he thought more of men. He was continually amazed by the courage and philosophy of the privates in his battalion. Ordinary foot soldiers. They were continually animated by incomprehensible and shining splendors. They charged and fought and died with an incorruptible spirit. In camp they fought among themselves, they lied and stole from each other and cheated at insignificant games, but in action they were bound inseparably together. None, at any cost, was ever deserted, left, on the field.

That, Elisha Abel still considered, was far more important, deeper, than any engagement or relationship with a woman; at the same time he had acquired a half humorous and half passionate interest in girls. The years of the war had brought him a new realistic experience of them; and, in consequence of that, Elisha felt that he knew women completely; he would never, he was certain, be overcome by one. His thoughts returned to Eva Gallatin —he had intended, anyhow, to get married immediately at the end of the war; the war was undoubtedly nearing its close; Polk Ewing seriously declared that Eva Gallatin was the loveliest girl alive. It sounded very promising.

Polk Ewing's father, he discovered, was absent in New Orleans, concerned with his cotton crop. Mrs. Ewing was faded in appearance but her spirit was unimpaired. She was charmingly personal and arch with him. It was evident that she still, blind to the passage of time, clung

to the assurance and manner of earlier successes. Linda Ewing, Elisha told himself, was evidently a nice girl. Her skin, like her abundant hair, was brown; it was almost olive; she owned an engaging smile and her teeth were magnificent. The Ewings were standing with Polk in an immense drawingroom dominated by a massive glittering crystal chandelier, and, with the opening of high doors, Mrs. Ewing went out to supper formally on Elisha Abel's arm.

"Linda," Polk Ewing said almost at once, "I'd like Major Abel to meet Eva Gallatin. I know what your objection will be, Eva doesn't want to meet Federal majors. I can't help that. You must manage it." Linda Ewing turned to Elisha. "She is very beautiful," she said, "you will be happy only looking at her." Polk interrupted his sister. "Elisha Abel thinks he is going to marry her," he announced. "He is going to leave a brass button with her and come back after the war." Mrs. Ewing said unexpectedly, "He will have to give Eva Gallatin more than a brass button to be successful with her." Linda Ewing studied him. "You would find it very difficult," she said at last. "I'd tell anyone else in a blue coat it was impossible." Polk Ewing was impatient with them all. "You are mad!" he declared. "Everyone of you. I warned Elisha Abel; I explained it would end in his death; but he only laughed at me. My own family, who know Eva and ought to know better, are worse. Unless it's a plot against the Lincoln government."

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"If you don't mind," Linda Ewing told Elisha, "we will walk. The Bells are very near. On Vine Street." They left the Ewing dwelling—Polk was detained at the Capitol—and proceeded through the early night to a party. "Mr. Bell is in Georgia," Linda explained; "it was very prudent of him to leave Nashville. Andrew Johnson is a bitter man. He was nothing but a tailor, you see. I suppose we must make allowances for him. We heard from father. Our cotton is sold. Isn't that miraculous. The factor at New Orleans arranged it. Cotton, you know, was confiscated." Soon he was seated quietly in the corner of a drawingroom that perfectly met his difficult requirements. There were fiddles, dancing; and, privately rather breathless, he was watching Eva Gallatin. She had on a very wide white skirt, yards and yards of a material so diaphanous that it seemed to float about her as she floated over the polished floor to music. Her little tight white satin bodice was less fair than her shoulders and arms. She was absolutely and unutterably beautiful. He had been totally unprepared for her appearance—she would be, he had thought, tall, a Minerva. Eva Gallatin, on the contrary, was smaller than any other woman in the drawingroom. Her hair was the palest possible gold; her face owned the colors and contours of camellia petals faintly touched with rose. She seemed to Elisha Abel to be immaterial; she had, he thought, a rare unearthly expression. Eva Gallatin was, more than like an actual woman, like a vision. She resembled a woman he might have seen, and desired all his life, in a dream. Her mouth was a pale and strange perfection. Her feet, momentarily visible in white satin, were incredibly exquisite.

She stopped dancing close beside him; the man with her went out to the hall for a glass of punch; the music continued. Elisha Abel, impelled by the necessity to overcome his ridiculous disturbed state, rose. "I'd like you to dance with me," he said to her. Eva Gallatin stared at him; she deliberately surveyed his uniform. "I don't know you," she said finally. "I am Elisha Abel," he told her; "from Kentucky. The bluegrass. I came with Polk Ewing's sister. I am staying with them." She was icily polite. "Everyone from Kentucky," she said, "thinks all the bluegrass is there. We have bluegrass in Tennessee. If you are a friend of Linda Ewing's I will dance with you. The second from this." The man who had been with her returned with a cup of punch and she turned away. Elisha sat down again. His heart was pounding; his face was hot; he was certain it was red. He was furious at himself. If she finds out how I feel about her, what she does to me, it's all over, he thought. I'll never get her. He was entirely definite about the necessity of getting her.

He danced with Linda Ewing; she danced, he discovered, quite well; and they went out together to the punch bowl. Elisha scarcely heard what she was saying. It was something about Eva Gallatin. "I spoke to her," he told Linda; "I asked her to dance. She said she would. The second from that one. Polk was right about her. I mean about her beauty. I never saw a girl who looked like her. Something in a dream." Linda Ewing smiled at him. "She always does that to men," she said. "Tell me, when you saw her did you think of a camellia? Did you think she was like one?" He was unreasonably annoyed.

"Yes," he replied shortly; "I thought of that. It is very natural." It must be, she asserted. "Every man who has ever seen a camellia does. I have heard a hundred of them say it. Do you know, I wonder if that is a compliment. I really do. A flower after all is cold. It is only lovely to look at. What do you think?"

"I am certain of it," he told Linda Ewing severely. She was, after all, rather dull. "A camellia is the most beautiful flower in existence. A gardenia is nothing compared to it." She knew exactly what was in his mind, she declared. "You are thinking no one ever said I was like one. Well, you are right," Linda added cheerfully; "no one ever has." His face was hot a second time. What an uncomfortable female Linda Ewing was. "Come," she said, taking his arm; "you will want to go back and watch her." That was so utterly true he made no effort to deny it. Eva Gallatin was seated on a couch of pale yellow brocade. There were seven men standing in a group before her. Seven, he had no doubt, of the twenty that Polk Ewing had said would be glad to kill him. It was possible they'd have a chance to try.

The dance she had promised to him began and he went up to her. She rose with a still face. Eva Gallatin was absolutely cold, distant, in his arms. Her face was turned away from him. He wanted to pick her up and crush her against his body. Bend her head back and kiss her. I will, he said to himself; before God, I will. Instead he told her a wholly unpremeditated, an apparently inexcusable, thing. "It is very pleasant," he said, "to have a great deal of money. Money with almost no end to it. I have and I'm glad of it." She gazed at him, clearly surprised. "I

know so little about that," she replied. "We have almost none, of course. Soon we will lose that. Everyone, I think, who has been faithful to the South is poor now. I suppose it is natural for you to be rich. The Ewings are. Very. They are for Lincoln, too, you see; paid with a great many pieces of silver."

The dance ended, she made a movement to leave him; but, very firmly, he took her out into the hall. "Thank you," she said; "I don't want punch." He did, Elisha Abel told her. "You seem to think it is a disgrace to have money," he proceeded. "No," she answered him in a loud crystal-like voice; "I think it is a disgrace for a Kentuckian to fight against the South." He argued with her earnestly. "Kentucky belongs to both the North and South, but more to the North than to the Confederacy. The elections must have shown you that. In Kentucky there is a sort of passion for the Constitution. I can't tell you why but it's true. My family, in reality, is divided—it fought in the Union army and equally with the South. I am almost the only one left alive. We have been killing each other for three years."

"I don't know anything about politics," Eva Gallatin told him; "the time for that has been over for a long while. We gave politics up for patriotism. We let money go, in Tennessee, to keep our honor." Tennessee, he agreed, was very honorable. "I suppose we are more practical," Elisha commented. "We are further north. We're west of south. That explains Kentucky." She knew nothing about the west, Eva Gallatin added. What, Elisha wondered, would he have done, which cause would he have supported, if he had met her before the war. He said

something about that. "Polk Ewing told me Nashville was dangerous. You are dangerous and not Nashville. You are so beautiful it's hard for me to think when I'm near you. I do manage to but that is because my character is so splendid." Eva Gallatin stared at him again. "There is something I must explain," she said; "you are so charmed with yourself it may not be clear. I danced with you because you came to Mr. Bell's with Linda Ewing. Nothing but that could have made me even speak to you. I hate the North and everyone in it. Specially I hate the soldiers who are killing the men I adore and destroying my land. If you came from New York I might, for a dance, be polite. Not from Kentucky. You represent everything that is hateful to me. You are hateful. I don't want you to go back to the drawingroom with me. Not even that little distance."

Eva Gallatin left him abruptly, the perfume of her presence died away. He drank five cups of punch in rapid succession. Polk Ewing arrived and Elisha drank more punch with him. "Polk," he said solemnly, "I have danced with her. You are right, Polk. I was right, too. She is going to marry me." Polk Ewing showed that he was amazed. "Did Eva Gallatin say she would marry you?" he demanded. "Oh, no," Elisha replied; "Good God, no! It amounts to the same thing. She admitted I was hateful to her. She told me I was." He filled his cup, he filled Polk's cup, with punch. "If I came from New York I wouldn't have a chance with her. But I don't, I'm a Kentuckian, and it's all right." Elisha, Polk Ewing said, was drunk. "You are drunk and, in spite of what I said, I am going to save your life. I'm fond of you. We

are going to the City Hotel and get drunker. Where it is safe. One of Linda's beaux can take her home."

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General Hood will attack on Sunday, Elisha Abel told himself; a great number of battles lately had occurred on Sunday: and, consequently, he went to Fort Negley early in the morning. It was the fourth of December. Nothing happened. On Monday the guns opened fire; some troops on a reconnaissance all but captured two Confederate generals. There was a reconnaissance in force Wednesday; at the beginning of evening, the weather, it had been threatening, grew worse. A cold rain fell. "Another dispatch arrived from Grant today," Polk Ewing told Elisha. They were in the drawingroom at the Ewings, waiting for Mrs. Ewing and Linda and supper. "The sharpest yet. Grant doesn't understand why we haven't beaten Hood. What we're waiting for. The next thing we will get is another general. It's a damned outrage. Thomas has the confidence and support of everyone here. We aren't ready to fight." The Southern troops made sallies upon the Union position; they set houses on fire; the Twelfth Kentucky infantry had a sharp skirmish. Then, it was Friday, a heavy snow storm occurred. When it stopped ice covered the ground, the trees, everything. No army could move.

A feeling of apprehension took possession of Elisha Abel; it was shared, he discovered, by all the officers in General Thomas's command. The rumor spread that Thomas, because of his inaction, was to be removed.

The weather became the only topic of wide interest in Nashville. The sun appeared and a warm wind came from the South. It was the twelfth, Monday again; the next evening General Couch summoned the officers of his division. "I have General Thomas's order of battle," he informed them. "Hood's line is established between the Nolensville and Hardin's pikes. Steedman will advance toward the Confederate right. Smith's corps make a left wheel with our entire right wing and envelop Hood's left. He is posting the Twenty-third corps at Lawrens Hill. General Thomas telegraphed City Point that he will attack tomorrow."

The morning following, at the head of his battalion in the Union line, Elisha wondered when he would see Eva Gallatin again. He was, he realized, faced with a great battle. The possibility of death, however, gave him little concern. Elisha was convinced that the war would not kill him. His situation with Eva Gallatin was more precarious than his position before Hood's determined army. The weather was perverse still—a dense fog hid everything. It was, he found, past seven o'clock. Soon faint rays of the sun were visible. At nine the fog had gone; the armies stood revealed to each other. On the far right Elisha could see the Federal cavalry advancing through the marshes of a creek. The Confederate works were not more than six hundred yards distant.

At noon a brigade of Wood's veteran division, just beyond Elisha, charged the enemy's salient on Montgomery Hill. It moved steadily up a steep slope against heavy musket and artillery fire; it reached the parapet broken and irregular; the Union colors were waved triumphantly.

The Federal troops swept forward. Two divisions of the Twenty-third corps were ordered to support A. J. Smith; but Elisha Abel's regiment was held inactive. At dusk the armies rested on the field. Elisha rode into Nashville with Colonel Rousseau and Thomas Speed. He left them at the Cunningham house, on High Street, General Thomas's headquarters, and proceeded to the Ewings. Only Linda was home.

Elisha, one booted leg hung over the other, sat with her wondering how he could best explain that he must see Eva Gallatin. In the meanwhile he told her about the battle. "Hood is beaten," he asserted; "but he'll continue to fight tomorrow. Perhaps, then, I'll go into action. There won't be many more chances." She studied him. "You like it, don't you," she said. "That is different from bravery. I know very brave men who hate to fight." How, Elisha desperately thought, could he see Eva. "It's wrong of me, of course," Linda admitted, "but I like the way you are better." Elisha answered abruptly, "I suppose it is in my blood. The Sashes and Abels were always fighting. They fought the Indians and the French and the British and now they are at each other. Look here, Linda," he said suddenly, "I want to see Eva Gallatin and if you can't arrange it no one can. I must see her at once." He stopped and gazed at her anxiously. It had been entirely natural to call her Linda. "I am not afraid of being killed," he explained; "it isn't that. I have to tell her something." He was, she complained, always in a hurry. "I can't do it though." She hesitated and disappointment cut at him. "You can," she added unexpectedly. "If she is home. Eva lives in a little house with

a white fence beyond Mr. Bell's, toward the Capitol, on Cedar Street."

"What am I expected to do," he demanded; "call on her? She wouldn't let me in the house without you." Linda Ewing pointed out that she didn't really expect anything. "I might hope you would stay here but I don't expect it." He rose. "Then you won't go with me?" She replied decidedly, "Certainly not. When we got there you would both hate me. After all I couldn't wait outside for you, could I? No, you must go alone. But I'll tell you this much—Eva will let you in the house. Elisha, you must forget I said that. It wasn't very nice of me. It's only true." She stood up and gently pushed him away from her. That, obscurely, annoyed Elisha Abel. He put an arm around Linda and kissed her. "I didn't mean to do that," he cried.

"I know," she said unevenly; "it was an accident. I'll forgive you. Don't be sorry, Elisha."

He left the Ewings with the feeling of Linda's soft lips against his mouth. She was the nicest girl he had ever known. Linda made him, she made everyone, absolutely comfortable. Mrs. Ewing was a fool. The pleasant air, the downright charm, the delightful food, at the Ewings, were all the result of Linda's tact and good sense. He had, he saw, reached a small house with a white fence beyond the Bell's. Elisha stopped at the gate to overcome a sudden panic of emotion. It would be necessary, he knew, to be entirely calm before Eva Gallatin. Elisha went forward; he firmly raised an iron knocker; Eva Gallatin herself opened the door.

"I came in from the field to see you," he said clearly;

"I wanted to do it before the battle went on tomorrow. There is something I must explain. You said that to me, if you remember, the other night." There was a dark shawl wrapped about her shoulders; her face, if possible, was lovelier than before. "I can't imagine what it is," she replied. "I thought I ended this. I tried to." He repeated, stubbornly, that there was something he must explain. Elisha Abel walked past her, into the hall. She closed the door. "It's too cold to keep it open," she told him. He followed Eva Gallatin into a small sittingroom. There was a fire of coals on a hearth; the room, lighted by a single glass lamp, was dim; a chair bore a heap of amber-colored muslin. "I am doing over a dress," Eva told him. "Don't think that is an apology. I am proud of it." He didn't answer. Elisha stood regarding her with his hands caught in his broad military belt. Eva Gallatin sat down. "Well?" she inquired.

"When Polk Ewing first told me about you," he proceeded, "I didn't believe him. I said then, only to be funny, that I intended to marry you. After that I saw you and it stopped being funny. It got to be serious. I wanted to marry you. In war, I reckon, things are different. I'm different from what I was. There isn't much time between battles. Men fall in love and are killed in one day. It won't be like that with me, though—I'm not going to be killed. We'll beat Hood, he's beaten now, and I'll come back. Remember the Confederacy will be over then. You did everything possible but it was no good. I admit you had to do it. I know what that means. I have to love you. That isn't romantic; I am not romantic; it is sensible. A fact. I have the things you like, the things

you ought to have, the things, in the end, that will make you happy." She started to speak; Elisha Abel stopped her. He twisted a button from his sleeve. "Keep this," he said; "I want you to have it. Don't answer me now. Think about what I've said. I'll be back, perhaps tomorrow, for you."

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Eva Gallatin mechanically took the brass button he gave her, she looked at it curiously and then, opening her fingers, she let it fall. Elisha picked the button up and laid it on a table beside her. He gazed thoughtfully at the evidences of poverty, an air of indefinable disorder, in the room. A pair of high black shoes had been hurriedly thrust under a sofa. Suddenly he felt overwhelmingly sorry for Eva: her radiance had fallen within the shadow of tragic events. She sat with her head bent, gazing fixedly at the floor. The dark shawl had slipped from her matchless shoulders. "There is nothing left for me to say," he told her. "I must go back to my men." She was, Elisha saw, very nervous. Eva Gallatin, he thought, started to speak, but she didn't make a sound. Her face had lost its beautifully faint stain of color. It was now, he thought, more like a mask of alabaster than a flower. He went noiselessly out of the house. She will marry me, Elisha told himself, riding at a hard gallop through the unfamiliar dark. Eva will marry me. His mind was filled by tableaux of that supreme event. We will go to Europe, he decided, to Rome and Paris and Russia and Athens, and all the kings and emperors of

the world will beg her for a dance. She'll make the Pope unhappy for the rest of his days. He saw Eva at courts and assemblies, gatherings of the most brilliant people alive, and she was always more brilliant than any other woman present. By God, Elisha Abel told himself, he would shoot anyone who batted an eye at her. His mother would be very happy about his wedding; she was a Cutts and that was a damned stiff family; more formal and critical than the Abels, his father's people. Not better, however. The Abels, the Sashes, were the best damn family in Kentucky, and Kentucky was the best state in the Union. The Kentucky troops fought harder than any other body of men in the history of war.

The drums, the bugles, sounded before dawn. A division of the Fourth corps advanced and drove in the rebel skirmish line. General Hood had fallen back and occupied a strong position on the Brentwood hills. His entire front was protected by redoubts. The new Confederate salient crowned a long steep ascent without cover; its flanks were guarded by masses of felled trees. Nothing was accomplished through the morning beyond the redisposition of the Union forces. Elisha's regiment was moved forward. Then Colonel Post, with a brigade, assaulted Hood's right. The charge was sounded and his men moved forward in a preliminary dead silence. Post was shot down. The assault was a failure. The brigade—it lost three hundred men in a few minutes—returned broken to the Federal line. Colored troops, making a demonstration east of the Franklin turnpike, disregarded all commands and excitedly rushed at the Confederate earthworks. They were raked by a tremendous flanking

fire, and Thompson, the colonel, barely rescued them. In the midst of so much Elisha Abel was inactive. He waited impatiently with Colonel Rousseau for the order to advance. It failed to arrive.

Instead, General McArthur, who commanded a division on Elisha's right, marched a brigade by the flank directly in front of General Couch's line, the Twelfth Kentucky infantry, and commanded his troops to fix bayonets. A bitter complaint rose from Elisha Abel's battalion. McArthur was going to carry the Confederate works above them. God damn it, Couch had offered to do that a long way back. McMillan's men would all be made generals and Colonel Rousseau attached to the quartermaster's department. They watched their advancing companions, however, with an intense community of spirit. McMillan's brigade moved down the slope to a narrow valley and resolutely made its way up the abrupt face of the farther rise toward the rebel defenses. They were held, Elisha had been informed, by General Bate, defended by a battery of Whitworth guns. The musket fire, the cannon, opened with a roar; the top of the hill was enveloped in smoke; when it drifted away a great shout rose from the Union army—the national flag was again securely planted against the sky.

That spectacle, Elisha Abel had a strong premonition, would end his active service. General Hood was in full retreat; the Twenty-third corps was ordered to pursue him; and, with almost no time at all, Elisha returned to the Ewings. Polk was at the Capitol; Mrs. Ewing and Linda had gone to Edgewood to escape the cannonading. Moses Gamblin once more packed his belongings and,

directing his servant to follow on the regimental wagon train, Elisha Abel left Nashville. He was in camp at Columbia on Christmas day; the Twenty-third corps marched to Clifton on the Tennessee river; there he learned it was to be taken by transports up the Ohio river to Cincinnati and sent east to Washington. He immediately obtained leave to proceed north by the Louisville and Nashville Railway and rejoin his command at Cincinnati.

He must, Elisha told himself, see Eva and insist upon the arrangement of their marriage before he left Tennessee. He rode into Nashville at dusk and found the Ewings at home. Mr. Ewing, returned from New Orleans, was a gaunt man with a saffron-colored face, small black eyes, steady and shining, and a moustache drooping like a black cord. His politeness was the perfection of that reassuring quality; but Mrs. Ewing's cordiality was oppressive—her attitude encouraged the belief that Elisha had returned to Nashville solely on her account. He was, he discovered, extraordinarily glad to see Linda again. Linda was the nicest girl it was possible to conceive of. It appeared to Elisha Abel, however, that she had changed. She was calmer, more indifferent, than he thought she would be. A faint disappointment pervaded him. But Polk Ewing, it was clear, was pleased and excited to have him back. He again accompanied Elisha up to the room he had occupied before.

"Does Eva know you are in Nashville?" Polk demanded at once. "Does she expect you? I saw her yesterday and she said nothing about it. I spoke of you, purposely, and if she didn't swoon with joy she didn't,

apparently, swim with hate." Elisha asked gravely, "How is she?" Polk Ewing studied him with care. He replied in a changed, a serious, manner. "I haven't seen much of her. No one has. Linda says she hasn't been well. Elisha, now I think of it, Eva doesn't look like herself. It's plain that her spirits are low. She is broken-hearted, of course, about the Confederacy; they all realize hope is useless now. Eva Gallatin will go into mourning."

"What is the matter with Linda?" Elisha asked.

"Nothing," Polk Ewing replied, in a surprised voice. "There never is. I thought you realized that. Why?" Elisha didn't answer him. "I wouldn't be surprised if Linda married William Catron. He is always with her," Polk added. Who, Elisha inquired, was William Catron. Pretty near everything, Polk replied. His grandfather was Chief Justice of the Tennessee Supreme Court. When Tennessee had a Chief Justice. He hadn't, Elisha Abel pointed out, asked about William Catron's grandfather. "He is the best lawyer in Nashville," Polk further explained, "and organized the Beauregard Dragoons at the beginning of the war. He was hurt, thrown from a horse, before they left the city, and had to stay behind. Even Andy Johnson thinks he is so useful he lets him remain in Nashville without taking the test oath. Someone is always trying to marry Linda," he complained. "If that happens I won't live in Nashville; I'll move to our plantation in Mississippi, above Baton Rouge on the Coast."

Polk left and a vague ill temper settled upon Elisha. He had been a fool to send Moses Gamblin north by river steamer. He needed him. He was, Elisha realized, tired

of uniforms. Of brass buttons. He was sick of the discomfort of campaigns and the loud confusion of battle. He wished to return to the order, the beauty, of the Kentucky bluegrass. Elisha Abel decided that, with the agreement of his mother, he would sell their house in Frankfort and move to the country. He thought about Calydon, on the Paris turnpike. It belonged partly to the Hazels and part to Gabriel Sash, who had married Liddy Hazel and was his cousin. All three of Gabriel's sons, and most of the Hazels, had been killed in the war. Yes, it was more than probable he could buy Calydon from Thomas Hazel's heirs. Eva would be lovelier than ever on the wide Calydon lawn, under the immense trees there. Together they would give his family a greater security and importance in the vastly wider national affairs that must follow upon the ending of the war.

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He was, Elisha Abel once more discovered, extraordinarily comfortable at the Ewings; supper was served by two adroit and personable negro maids; the Madeira wine and later brandy were disarming in their fragrant delicacy. When Mrs. Ewing and Linda rose he continued to sit a long time at the table with Polk and his father. He must, Elisha reminded himself, make his excuses and find Eva Gallatin. However he failed to stir. The operation of his cotton plantation, Mr. Ewing asserted, had proceeded without interruption by the emancipation of his slaves. "There are no signs of change," he continued; "the first horn blows an hour before daybreak and the

overseer unlocks the stables for the hands; the second horn sounds and the hoe gang leaves for the fields. They lay off at noon, perhaps, when it is hot, for two or three hours. There is no labor after dark. The negroes are paid on Saturday. They are free and we are not. The old responsibilities keep up—a midwife for the lying-in women; the children's nursery; land for the men to cultivate; allowances of tobacco and part of the peanut crop. When the cotton is picked every field hand expects his dram in the morning. If a negro needs whipping I am still capable of that. Take some brandy."

It was late; he must go immediately, Elisha realized; he drank more brandy.

"I fought for the Union," Elisha Abel declared; "and not for the niggers. We don't know anything about niggers in Kentucky. We don't make cotton. But we are hell when it comes to the Constitution. We have a hundred men in Kentucky right now who know more about the Constitution of the United States than Thomas Jefferson ever did. My father, Manoah Abel, was a Whig, and Bruton Abel, my grandfather, was a Whig. All the Sashes were Whigs. It's a tradition in our family. Thomas Jefferson never was a damn thing to us. We belong, gun and document, to Henry Clay. Henry Clay was the greatest American who ever lived. Anybody who thinks to the contrary doesn't know the history of this country." He reached for the brandy decanter. "I don't want to hear Polk say he wasn't," Elisha added. "There is another thing, now I am mentioning things, I want to mention. It's this—the bluegrass in Kentucky is not only the finest and bluest bluegrass in the world but the only

bluegrass there is. Polk, did you say there was bluegrass in Tennessee?"

Polk Ewing rose. He was sorry, he explained, he must go: it was his understanding that Elisha had an engagement in Nashville. "You are wrong," Elisha replied: "what do you think of that. You haven't answered my question." If it was about Kentucky, Polk asserted, Elisha had exhausted that subject. The three men moved into the drawingroom; Polk and Mr. Ewing disappeared; Mrs. Ewing was not present. Elisha sat on a small sofa beside Linda. He was sweet to stay with her, she said; to keep her from being entirely alone. Elisha replied, "I hear you are never alone. I don't like what I heard. It sounds frivolous. That doesn't become you. You are a domestic sort of woman."

"You mean I am not like Eva Gallatin," Linda told him.

"No one is like Eva Gallatin," he declared. "She is a camellia. An alabaster camellia. The most beautiful woman in the courts and assemblies of Europe." Linda contradicted that. "Eva Gallatin has never been abroad." He said, very severely, "Don't interrupt me. It isn't becoming. You must always be polite. All the kings and emperors in the world want to dance with her. The Pope will never recover from her beauty." Linda Ewing spoke coldly. "Why don't you tell Eva that. It's wasted on me. You will have a chance tomorrow night. At Mrs. Acklin's." Elisha grew dignified. "I will be the judge of that," he observed; "make my own addresses to Miss Gallatin. You might need to advise the men of Tennessee but not a Kentuckian." Elisha remembered, sud-

denly, that he had kissed Linda; it was very pleasant; he concluded to do it again. He had made, he saw, a mistake. However, she wasn't annoyed. Linda Ewing was a very nice girl. "You are a very nice girl," he told her. "Never let men kiss you. Especially William Catron." That, Elisha Abel reflected, will surprise her.

It did.

She left the drawingroom.

Elisha returned to the diningroom and the decanters; there was Bourbon whisky on a sideboard. Linda Ewing is mad at me, he thought. I made her mad and she is the nicest girl in the world. Eva Gallatin is the most beautiful creature alive, I am going to marry her, and Linda is in love with William Catron. She would, he told himself, marry William. That was clearly absurd. Linda was too nice for him. A splendid arrangement occurred to him—William Catron ought to marry Eva Gallatin and he, Elisha Cutts Abel, would wed Linda. He would wed Linda because she was so nice and because he had made her mad. He could never, then, marry Eva and kill anyone who batted an eye at her. That realization made him so sad that tears rolled over his cheeks. A sob shook him and he searched for his handkerchief. There was a stir in the drawingroom; it was, Elisha immediately concluded, Linda; she had come back because she was sorry for him. He saw, instead of Linda, Mrs. Ewing.

Elisha went quickly and silently through the doorway into the hall. He continued to his room. When, at last, he was undressed, in bed, it seemed to him that he was on a transport with his corps, going up the river to Cincinnati. The Ohio was surprisingly rough. Polk Ewing

woke him. The room was bright with sunlight. "I am not well," Elisha said. "I must stop drinking Madeira. Have you seen Linda this morning?" Polk replied, "Naturally. She told you we were going to Mrs. Acklin's and that Eva would be there. You ought to remember her house: you fought a battle all around it." Elisha rose. The room rocked. Something unfortunate, connected with Linda Ewing, had happened last evening. It came back to him slowly. He found her in the lower hall.

"I am sorry," Elisha said at once. "It was the Madeira." She laughed at him. "I have a plan," he continued; "part of it concerns you. Us. I want to marry you. I wanted to the first time I saw you but I only found it out last night. When my mind was quite clear. Will you marry me?"

"Of course not," Linda Ewing said firmly. "I wouldn't think of it. Anyhow, you must see Eva first. That is what you came back to Nashville for." He repeated his simple declaration. "I love you and want to marry you." A panic seized Elisha. Perhaps Linda would not marry him. It might well be too late. He had been inconceivably stupid. She held him, physically and spiritually, away from her. "Tonight," she said, "when you are with Eva Gallatin, you will probably change your mind again." She turned away; Linda vanished in a domestic region unfamiliar to him back of the hall. Elisha Abel stood with his head sunk. At lunch, he considered, everyone, and especially Linda, was offensively gay. He declined, with dignity, the Madeira wine. Afterwards Elisha wanted to be alone. He walked through the city to the steep brick levee. It was lined with shallow river steamboats. The

levee was heaped with supplies for the Federal army. Fodder for horses. Linda, he was certain, wouldn't marry him.

Eva Gallatin, in the amber-colored dress, once more danced with Elisha. She was, he realized, the most beautiful woman he would ever know. Her eyes were closed. A small hard object, round like a brass button, was concealed in the palm of her hand by a glove. It pressed into his back and made him horribly uncomfortable. He watched, over Eva Gallatin's incomparable shoulder, Linda dancing with a man who was noticeably lame. Probably it was William Catron. She seemed to be very happy. The dancing stopped; he walked with Eva to the punch bowl. The color in her cheeks was like a faint stain of rose on the petals of a camellia. She smiled uncertainly at him. Elisha went hastily, when the music took Eva away, in search of Linda Ewing. She, too, was dancing. He stood by the door, waiting for her. She saw Elisha and, ever so slightly, Linda waved her hand. An instant deep security, a total joy, took possession of him.

IX

Camilla Sash, seated with her father on the portico at Calydon—the impressive portico added to the house by Elisha Abel—gravely considered what he had just told her about the National Democratic Convention at Baltimore. It was, it appeared to Camilla, very confusing. For example—the Democrats and the Liberal Republicans had the same candidate, Mr. Greely; the straight-out Democrats, she had learned, wanted a Mr. O'Conor to be President of the United States; the Union Republicans would hear of no one but General Grant. Politics, Camilla thought, were rather absurd; mostly unnecessary; in spite of all the conventions and efforts to the contrary General Grant would be reëlected. The North would see to that. They couldn't, in the South, expect anything else. Not with the way the war had turned out. The war! Camilla sighed. It had ended seven years ago, and yet

its tragic intensity, its dark drama, were as vivid in her mind as though Shiloh had just been fought.

Little, for Camilla, had occurred since the day, in 1864, when her brother Wickliffe was carried home from the battle of Cynthiana. Before that Belvard, her elder brother, had been brought back to Calydon for burial. James's body had never been recovered from the field of Chickamauga. She watched with still eyes the July dusk filling the meadows that reached down to the Paris Turnpike. Her three brothers and Murril and Ambrose New and Callam Hazel and John. All her young world, virtually, slain, ended, by the war. Only Mason Hazel remained with her in a new and largely blank existence. Fireflies rose through the bluegrass. Her father, from an older generation, a farther time still, was different—he had never been a familiar part of her life. Camilla had always faintly dreaded him. She glanced at him, and, as usual, his lips were pressed into a mocking and doubtful line. Gabriel Sash sat stiffly erect, the arm useless from a sabre wound hanging straight down at his side, his hazel brown eyes intolerant and clear. He seemed gaunt and lonely.

Camilla's thoughts left her father and dwelt upon her mother, now dead five years. She was a little afraid of Gabriel Sash but indifferent to her mother. Liddy Sash had been at the same time too sentimental and too sharp. None of her children, except it might have been Wickliffe, owned more than a conventional regard for her. For example, she had been ridiculous about the war and the South: from the day Gabriel Sash entered the Union army until her death she scarcely addressed a word to

him. She had refused to remain in Kentucky while it was opposed to the Confederacy. "How old are you, Camilla?" her father demanded with a sudden and disconcerting brutality.

"Why," she replied confused, "I must be, yes—I am thirty anyhow. Isn't that dreadful?"

"Nonsense," he said; "it's more than that. You were two years older than Wickliffe. He was born in 1840. You must be thirty-four years old. Are you going to marry Mason Hazel?" he persisted. A hot color burned in Camilla's cheeks. An angry resentment at her father's lack of delicacy came to her support. "Only Mason ought to ask that," she replied. "It concerns him exclusively." She was, afterwards, struck silent by her daring. "I am not curious," Gabriel Sash explained. "I think you will admit curiosity is not one of my many faults. Your existence here, it seems to me, is very bad for you. It's unnatural. You are growing older all the time and doing nothing to make your life satisfactory. There isn't a thing, actually, for you to do at Calydon; Linda Abel manages her house very well; there are plenty of servants. I like to have you near me, but I can, after all, take care of myself. It bothers me to see you sitting on the portico, or in the drawingroom, day after day. Year after year. Everyone agrees you are charming to look at; your disposition is splendid; you could be an admirable mother. I hate to see so much wasted."

"Father," Camilla answered in a voice at once placid and acute with pain, "I was thinking about that before you spoke. But in my own way. My mind was filled with Belvard and Wickliffe and James. I was remembering

how Callam Hazel's voice sounded and what Ambrose New looked like. I want to keep them all before me as bright and clear as possible. I don't want to forget or lose the littlest thing about them. Don't you see, father, I was happy with them; they were everything to me; then the war took one away after the other."

"It didn't take Mason Hazel away," Gabriel pointed out. "He has been in love with you, I believe that is the phrase, for years. Damn it," he cried, breaking into the even manner of his speech, "I don't want you to turn into a wretched old virgin under my eyes! It amounts to that. The Sashes have always been positive people; they were good or they were bad, one or the other, with all their hearts." Camilla said, "I love Mason and I could never love him, if that is plain. Perhaps it is because he had to stay home from the war and take care of Greenland and his mother. All the rest, you see, went and were killed. Somehow Mason seems different from them. I think of him differently. I suppose you will say I am just a romantic woman." Not romantic, he replied; immeasurably unjust. "Twenty deaths would have been easier than the responsibility Mason supported. Boys, remember, are quite as romantic as girls. Mason was braver, making crops, than any of his brothers who were killed in action. He ought to have the reward, if he thinks it's a reward, of your love."

Camilla Sash said again, stubbornly, that she could never marry Mason Hazel. "I can't explain it better than I have. I don't believe I want to marry anyone. Father, if I like to sit on the portico, or in the drawingroom, the way you said, if that is what I wish to do with my life,

why can't I do it? Why is it wrong? Do I have to like things? The past was so terribly happy that what happens now is nothing in comparison. Nothing! I would rather be quietly by myself, remembering, than go to any party in the world." Gabriel Sash studied her acutely. "I don't quite believe you," he finally asserted. "You are not telling me all the truth. You can't be so totally different from your blood. I hope I am right—I don't much care if you are good or bad; it doesn't matter if you are keeping something absolutely disreputable from me; that would be better, at worst, than to see you come gradually to nothing like my sister Nancy."

"I am afraid there is no horrible secret," she replied; "I must admit, father, that I am rather good. That is, I do my duty here at Calydon and go to church and tell you all of the truth. I admire Mason as much as you do, but love is different. You don't, if you are a woman, love a man for his good qualities. Or, rather, you love him for what he really is and not for what he seems to be. For example, you might believe a man was unutterably bad, when I would see something in him hidden from you and love him for it. That is a part of love. There is a great deal more. I understand about it but I couldn't put it into words. You would laugh at me." Gabriel Sash admitted that he had never been greatly impressed by the beauty or solemnity of love. "It is very well thought of," he admitted; "a great many people allow their lives to be influenced, even ruined, by it. That would be impossible for me. I married; I had children and did what I could for them—it was all very much like Mason Hazel at Greenland. I performed a dull and inevitable duty.

"The trouble with people, Camilla," he proceeded, "is that they expect too much. When they ought to get married they are searching for love. Girls are addressed by men, and very good men, too, but they expect angels. Angels very much like Jeb Stuart with a yellow silk sash and a rosebud in his jacket. Almost everyone, I can't imagine why, thinks it is his or her right to be happy. They think happiness ought to come up and kiss them on both cheeks. If you are occupied, if you forget that you are alive, then you are happy. I want you to be occupied, Camilla. It is better to be visibly active, to be busy about a hundred unimportant realities, than to live in your mind. You are, I will repeat it, a Sash. A violent and passionate and faithful family. I am always afraid of it; I am afraid of myself; I am afraid of you."

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Linda Abel, in pale blue muslin and the Abel pearls, came out upon the portico. She was, Camilla knew, very fond of Gabriel Sash; Linda sat with a hand on his shoulder. "I am bothered about Elisha," she told Gabriel; "he is impossible. You are all impossible. Kentucky is impossible. I could, and very easily, wish to be back in Nashville. Kentucky stayed in the Union, it fought for the North, but if you say anything about that now your life is in danger. Elisha was insulted in Lexington again today; by a total stranger; on the street. He called Elisha a black Republican and a nigger lover. Simply because he was in the Federal army. I think it is natural for him to support Grant. You'd think Kentucky would support

Grant. Not at all. It is worse here than South Carolina was before the war. Gabriel, a number of people have threatened to kill Elisha. The tobacco barn was set on fire. He won't be a Democrat. What am I to do about it?"

"Nothing," Gabriel Sash replied; "threats are always more unpleasant than dangerous; it isn't necessary for him to change his party. Elisha's politics, his opinions, won't matter to Kentucky. Not in his lifetime. Even if the Radicals have become respectable Republicans. The state has given up its sinful ways and returned to Democracy." Linda was interested in what Gabriel said; Camilla Sash was only fatigued by it. More vain politics. General Grant would be elected. Her father, with his questions about her age and stupid remarks on love, had only succeeded in annoying her. It seemed to Camilla that his unsparing gaze pierced into her brain and to the dark recesses of her heart. She almost hated him. The dusk had given place to an evening already luminous with moonlight. The white fences of the pastures were visible; she could see the pale hard glitter of the Paris pike. Gabriel Sash's dogmatic voice broke again into the private region of her thoughts. "When the Republicans nominated John Harlan, last year, Elisha was certain the Democrats were beaten. Leslie Coombs and Robinson and Richard Jacob supported Harlan. I warned them it would do no good. Even with a weak candidate like Preston Leslie the Democrats couldn't lose."

Camilla Sash turned resolutely away to the past; she again filled the lawn before her with young lost figures. Vanished shapes. Once more she played a game with Wickliffe and Belvard and Ambrose New and Callam

Hazel and Ambrose kissed her on the mouth. She had pretended to be furious, Camilla recalled; that was inevitable; underneath her assumed anger she had been unexpectedly stirred. She had hoped Ambrose would kiss her again. Well, he never did. He was killed in the war. They were all killed, and left her alone with Mason. A horse and rider softly approached over the sod. It was —as though he had been created there by her thought— Mason Hazel. He tied his horse to the hitching rail and sat on the portico steps. Mason was a silent man with a finely shaped head and thin nervous hands. It was, she reflected, absurd for him to be nothing more, nothing better, than a farmer. A sort of superior overseer. Men, she knew, liked him; they respected his attainments; he could, she had heard, rise to a high position in Kentucky; but he did nothing to justify such admiration. Mason was, to Camilla, dull. Even his love for her was tiresome—it went on and on without excitement or variety. He told her, at appropriate moments, that he loved her; more infrequently, now, Mason asked her to marry him. That was all. No woman, Camilla was certain, would find that engaging. Elisha Abel appeared from the house. He sat beside Mason on the steps.

"When was it," Elisha demanded generally, "I bought Calydon?"

"The spring of 1867," Gabriel Sash told him. "That was the year, if you remember, we first seriously planted tobacco." Elisha Abel went on. "Five years, then. I did Bland Hazel an injustice—I said he would spend the money he got from that sale in a year. The last is just gone." Gabriel Sash demanded, "What do you mean?

How do you know Bland has spent everything? Did you hear from him?" Yes, Elisha replied, he had heard very directly from Bland. "I saw him today. He is in Lexington. At the Phoenix Hotel."

Camilla Sash, suddenly, was breathless.

"He has been on the Mississippi river," Elisha proceeded; "at Baton Rouge and Vicksburg, Natchez and New Orleans. I take it gambling." Gabriel spoke. "There is an old saying in the Sash family that trouble always comes from the direction of the south. I don't know how it started, but, by God, it's true!" It was Bland's hope, Elisha explained, to return to Calydon and manage the stables. "I don't blame him for that. Calydon was his home. Bland pointed out, too, that the sums paid for fast trotting horses have gone up enormously in the last year. Especially since Goldsmith Maid's time against Lucy at Mystic Park. Bland said Robert Bonner's Joe Elliott went a mile privately in two fifteen. Longfellow or Harry Bassett must be worth two or three thousand dollars." It would be wonderful, Camilla thought, if Bland Hazel, who was her uncle, could come back to Calydon. Bland, and not Elisha Abel, not even her own father, belonged there. Calydon had been built, long ago, by Ament Hazel.

"I came here soon after I married Liddy, around 1836," Gabriel Sash asserted; "Bland was running the stables then, and he near ruined Calydon to do it. If you put him on the place, Elisha, I will retire. I have been manager now for nearly forty years; I know what Calydon will do and what it won't; it can't support Bland Hazel." A sharp disappointment, an oppressive pain, assailed Camilla. She clenched her hands—there was, she recognized, a danger

of tears. She rose and walked down the marble steps of the portico to the grass. Everyone, she told herself, alone in the moonlight, was hideously unfair to Bland. They hated him because, in a perfectly fair duel, he had killed his brother Archelaus. Mason Hazel's father. If Bland hadn't shot Archelaus then Archelaus would have shot him. There was nothing disreputable in a duel. On the contrary—it was an affair of honor. Almost all the celebrated men in Kentucky had been involved in them. Why, Elisha's father, Manoah Abel, had killed Jarrot Bensalem.

She had always adored Bland Hazel; he was her most enthralling relative. He was equal, even, to the figures of her young lost existence. Bland remained, in a time when men were drab, a picturesque and graceful being. Naturally he had spent the money he had received from the sale of Calydon to Elisha Abel. He would always spend all the amounts he could get his hands on. He wasn't frugal, like a farmer; Bland was a Kentucky gentleman. He had fought miraculously for the South; but there were insinuations, jealous detractions, even about that. He had been, her father asserted, no better than a border ruffian, a lieutenant under William Quantrell. Bland Hazel, it was insisted, helped Quantrell to destroy Lawrence and murder its old men and children. Bland had contradicted that; he told her it was a damned lie; and Camilla believed him. She knew that Bland was truthful with her. He was, in a manner not understood at present, a person of honor. A vision of his narrow dark face, wasted with the difficulties of his temperament and existence, and his long black hair, rose before her. She hadn't seen him for three

years, Camilla realized. He had only been home once since Calydon was sold. Now when he wanted to return to the bluegrass, to all his early and truest associations, her own father refused to accept him. Perhaps Elisha wouldn't listen to Gabriel Sash. Horses were surprisingly valuable now and Bland knew more about them than anyone else in the world. He had spent most of his life around stables. She would, Camilla decided, explain all this to Linda. Perhaps she would influence her husband in Bland's favor. When, Camilla wondered, would she see Bland Hazel. Probably tomorrow. Tomorrow Bland would be at Calydon, where he belonged, again.

I adore him, she repeated, with silent moving lips. It wasn't necessary, with Bland alive, for her to love anyone. Her feeling for him completely satisfied her. She didn't want to be married. The thought of children made her vaguely sick. She was completely happy, against all that her father protested, with her memories, her world of gracious shadows, and the possibility of sitting quietly beside her uncle.

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Mason Hazel came across the lawn to her. "You are like a woman made out of moonlight," he told Camilla. She didn't answer. "You move the way moonlight moves," he continued; "on still slippers. I am having a bad evening, Camilla. One of the times when it seems impossible to exist without you." Camilla Sash asked, "What were they talking about when you left the portico?" Bland Hazel, he replied. "He appears to be serious

about living here. That would be dangerous. Gabriel Sash never got along with him. My own feelings are mixed—he did kill my father in a duel, but Bland forced it on him. They were brothers but very different. I don't hate him for that so much as I do for what he secretly is. There is a treacherous and fatal quality in Bland. The stories we have all heard, about his cold brutality, I am certain are true." Camilla was wholly calm. "I suppose," she said, "to some people his character must sound like that. Adventure and daring would to a farmer. People are so different from each other. You just said so yourself. Uncle Bland isn't like you at all. He gambles, of course, and wins great sums of money, and men try to kill him. If anyone tried to kill me I'd want to do it first."

Mason Hazel laughed at her. "You wouldn't kill a mosquito," he informed Camilla. "You are the most peaceful creature alive. There isn't a trace of resentment or violence in you. But you are right about me—I am a farmer. Adventure and daring have not been part of my life. I am sorry for that, Camilla, if you are sorry. If, because I had to stay home from the war, you think less of me then that makes it even more tragic than monotonous." Mason stopped, patently hoping for some reassurance, any evidence of understanding, from her. Camilla said nothing; she purposely enveloped Mason Hazel in an uncomfortable silence. At last she spoke. "Women are rather silly. They never seem to understand what is splendid and what isn't. They always appear to like the wrong things. The wrong men. If I did admit to liking one—" she stopped and enigmatically smiled.

"Yes?" he demanded. "What then?"

"Everybody would be horrified," she went on lightly. Camilla had an overpowering desire to explain that she adored her uncle, Bland Hazel. She wanted desperately to tell Mason how stupid and uninteresting he was compared with Bland. She wished to say that all the people who spoke unpleasantly about him were dull or jealous. You are all jealous of him, she thought she must cry out. You are careful, too, when you run him down, when you lie about him, not to let Bland hear you. He'd kill you, every one, if he knew what you said. Camilla walked slowly back to the portico with Mason beside her. It was a very bad night for him, he murmured. The conversation about Bland Hazel had come to an end. Mason untied his horse and, dejected-looking, rode away toward Greenland. Linda Abel went to bed. Elisha and Gabriel Sash sat lost in solitary reflections.

Camilla Sash repeated to herself, Bland will be here tomorrow. She went up to her room and studied her face in a mirror. Had she aged, Camilla wondered, in the past three years? She wanted to look her best when Bland Hazel saw her. She lay straight and composed on the lavender-scented handwoven linen of her virginal bed, examining her feelings about her uncle. In a way, she thought, he took the place of her father. She never had a marked affection for Gabriel Sash; the truth was she had been lonely with him and with her mother; she had turned for companionship to her brothers and cousins; and fastened her devotion upon Bland. She felt, at the same time, older than he was; Camilla had an odd sense of the necessity to protect him; she was filled with plans and contrivances for his happiness. Bland Hazel,

she recognized, knew nothing of this. In all her life he had talked to her, noticed her, not more than three or four times. On those occasions, however, Camilla considered that he had said a great deal. She had naturally been very sympathetic. He stood secretly in the place of her father, and, at the same time, she thought of Bland as a child.

Her child.

Bland Hazel appeared at breakfast. He wore riding boots with white linen breeches and a white coat with long tails to it and an informal narrow black tie. He was, Camilla saw gladly, quite the same—a dark face with an autocratic nose and mouth slightly twisted; a gaze that ceaselessly moved from object to object, person to person; his jet black hair swung forward over his ears and across a good brow. Bland spoke first to Linda Abel and then to her; he nodded generally to the men of his family. A servant brought him coffee, and, lifting the cup, his hand showed itself to be as steady as rock. "This is pleasant," he declared. "There is no land like the bluegrass. None so good. I told Elisha in Lexington, and I'll repeat it here, at Calydon where I was born, that I hope to stay. I'll stay if I'm nothing more than a stable boy. I reckon that won't be necessary. There was a time when I wanted to travel, I had to see everything there was to see. Well, I saw it, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific, the Gulf of Mexico to the lakes in Canada, and now I am back. For ever. Home. I am ready to settle down. I have reached the time of life, Gabriel, when the possession of land, the dignity of a position, are indispensable."

"You think you want to settle down; it engages you

for the moment; but you will soon change your mind," Gabriel Sash told him concisely. "Men like you remain nowhere. They move on or something, someone, moves them."

"That, generally, is true," Bland Hazel acknowledged; "it was true of me. But not now. And no one will move me. I am difficult to interfere with if my mind is fixed." His mouth hardened; he looked about the table with a sudden metallic glitter in his eyes. Camilla's heart beat with sympathy for him. Her father and Elisha Abel were detestable. She couldn't bear to have Bland received so unsympathetically. "You must be tired, seeing and doing so much," Camilla said to him in a warm voice; "and seem perfect to be back in the bluegrass. You will raise the best horses in the world here." Bland Hazel glanced at her, and she smiled into his eyes. Camilla wanted to reassure him. To make him feel that he had come home.

"I suppose the stables have gone down since we ran Hymettus against Nicodemus Hammerty's mare Nigeria," Bland said to Gabriel; "we would have won a good sum if Fauche Brimage hadn't pulled the race." Gabriel Sash replied briefly, "They went down then, and, until now, I have been able to keep them down. I don't know what Elisha's plans are." He had none that was immediate, Elisha admitted. "Your things must be moved from the Phoenix Hotel," he continued to Bland Hazel. "I will send into Lexington for them. We can't have you there with Calydon open." He rose, and, with Gabriel Sash, left the room. Bland Hazel was apparently intent upon his coffee cup. Linda vanished. Camilla wished that Bland would speak to her. He was so intent

upon his own thoughts, his face was so clouded and severe, that she was timid about addressing him. At last he looked up. "No one," he said, "has exactly a wreath of roses for me." He glanced around, as though, Camilla thought, to make sure they were alone.

"You must tell me what it is like here," he went on. "Advise me. I have a feeling you can be trusted." Camilla replied eagerly, with her hands straining together, "Of course I can, but I don't know if I'm wise enough to advise you. I'll tell you everything I know the minute it happens." She was happier than she had ever been before. She might be useful, an assistance, to Bland. He depended upon her. "Your father dislikes me," Bland went on. "He has always disliked me. Gabriel won't have me at Calydon if he can prevent it. What is Elisha Abel like? I know very little, actually, about him. His mother was a damned cold woman, I remember that. Rich and proud and cold." It was, Camilla said, a wonderful description. "You pretend you don't know people and see through them, describe them, perfectly. Everyone says Elisha was a good officer. He wasn't what you were though—in the cavalry. Elisha was only an infantryman. I don't think that is very stirring." Elisha and Gabriel Sash, Bland asserted, had been in the wrong army. "There was too much of that in your family. Only Wickliffe was loyal to his land and his people. The war isn't over yet. Not quite, Camilla. We are going to remember the men who were our enemies; we still owe something to the Union provost marshals."

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Camilla's efforts to have Bland Hazel definitely established at Calydon, in charge of the stables, changed into an instinct to avoid all mention of that infinitely desirable consummation. She wanted Bland to remain as long as possible, and that, she began to see, depended on the continuation of his present informal situation. She had been unsuccessful with Linda Abel. Linda, it was clear, had no attitude toward Bland at all. Bland Hazel and the stables, she said, were Elisha's affair. The others were not so negative. They were, where her uncle was concerned, merely polite and, as she had asserted, cautious. The meals, when he was present, became stiff and perceptibly uncomfortable. Bland was, however, more frequently away than at hand. He was at once mysterious and vaguely portentous about that. His political opinions, democratic and completely, locally, Southern, were aggressive. At supper, Bland was absent, Gabriel Sash said that a fresh outrage had occurred near Versailles. "A respectable negro, Jones Howland, was beaten last evening by masked riders. He died this morning. He was the fifth black who showed a disposition to vote murdered in the bluegrass within a month." A deep silence followed that assertion. Finally Elisha spoke. "Have you noted Bland Hazel's horses?" he asked Gabriel Sash. "He has two now. Both very fine. I saw one, the black, at noon. He had been ridden almost to death." A second reflective silence enveloped the table. Camilla was possessed by a burning resentment, a deep sense of injustice. She spoke to Bland on the portico the next day.

"You said," she reminded him, "that you might depend on me to find out what it was like here. At supper,

last night, father was talking about a negro killed by masked riders near Versailles, and Elisha said your black horse had been ridden almost to death. He spoke about how fine your horses were and that you had two." Bland Hazel abruptly told her to sit down. He sat, in morose thought, beside her. "Now," he said finally, "they have me riding out at night and beating Versailles niggers to death. Elisha and your father are generous-minded men. But they are a little, just a shade, too confident in themselves. They think they are too high, too important, to be reached. Rich and cold and proud." His manner grew both repressed and violent. "I hate Gabriel Sash," Bland said. "I have always hated him. It's the Sash blood—a God damned arrogant and bigoted family." He stopped, glancing carefully at Camilla. "I don't mind it when you say that," she reassured him. "Bland, I know exactly what you mean. Lots of people hate them. My mother was very unhappy. I am hardly more than a stranger to my father. I hope," she hesitated, once more timid, "you don't think I'm like that. You see, I am a Sash too." Bland Hazel was impatient with her. "Don't be maidenly," he replied; "didn't I say that I trusted you. I'm talking to you."

Camilla was, again, utterly happy. "They didn't exactly admit it," she went on, "but it was plain they thought you might be one of the night riders." He studied her carefully. "What do you think?" Bland inquired. "How can you ask that?" Camilla demanded indignantly. "You are an officer and a Hazel. A gentleman. You wouldn't wear a mask and murder helpless negroes simply because they tried to vote." He laughed shortly, "If everyone

agreed with you things would be better," he informed her. "I know you," Camilla Sash declared confidently. "We might as well be clear about one thing," Bland gloomily proceeded; "I will never live at Calydon again. The Hazels have gone down in the world and the Abels are moving farther up. Northern money did it. Money from the North and the Lincoln guns. Mason Hazel was careful not to lose anything by the war. I hear our Mason is in love with you."

"He wants to marry me," Camilla admitted.

"You are getting along," Bland said with a brutality identical to her father's attitude. She didn't mind Bland. "In a great many ways you are a fool not to accept it." She had no wish to accept Mason, Camilla replied with a show of spirit. "I don't want to get married at all. Just to think of marriage makes me ill. If there is something wrong with me I can't help that. I don't want to help it. I want to stay the way I am and help you." He patted her hand with long thin fingers turned back at the ends. "Probably you are right," Bland admitted. "I never needed to get married. We may both go farther the way we are. Free and at the same time together." Camilla said with a sigh, "I wish there was something I really could do for you." She might have a chance sooner than she thought for, he replied. He continued, speaking more to himself than to Camilla, "If I had money I wouldn't require help. I ought to have it. Calydon ought to belong to me. Elisha Abel has no right to it. He bought it with his mother's damned Yankee money. He has no call, with his Union sympathies, to be in the bluegrass. It would serve them nicely if both Elisha and Gabriel Sash were driven out

of the state. Or—," he broke off, sinking again into a dark silence.

"Of course you are right," Camilla Sash declared; "you are right and I am no help at all. If I had the say of it Calydon would belong to you. The house and woods and pastures and stables. Every bit. I haven't. There isn't a thing I can do." He proceeded, "If I owned Calydon you would sit on the portico in silks and direct everything. No one here, Camilla, appreciates you like me. Linda Abel patronizes you and your father is indifferent. Elisha doesn't know you are alive. I get in a rage when I see it." Camilla smiled tenderly at him. "Your father has money. It is ridiculous to think you won't get it until he is dead." Camilla Sash leaned earnestly toward him. "If I had any," she repeated in a low cry, "I would give every cent to you." He gazed at her speculatively. "Gabriel Sash must have fifty thousand dollars," he asserted; "more." Bland Hazel rose and left her. She watched his tall flexible figure, the shoulders high and narrow, disappear into the house. He was miraculous, magnificent!

It was true, unhappily, that she would have no money until her father died. An inexcusable wish formed in her mind, on her lips—she wanted Gabriel Sash to die. Then she could give Bland money. Fifty thousand dollars. Whatever she had. Bland absolutely needed money. Some men were like that—money made them secure and happy. It affected their ideas and conduct. Unlike Linda Abel, who had inherited Mrs. Abel's lovely jewels, she owned nothing of value.

Mason, inevitably, appeared with the evening. Bland Hazel had remained at Calydon after supper; the Hazels,

the Sashes and Abels sat on the lawn. "I went to Frankfort today," Mason related, "to a meeting about the outrages in the counties around here. The night riders. We organized a company of regulators to put them down." That, Bland Hazel asserted, was an excellent idea. He would consider joining it. "You would find it difficult," Mason told him bluntly. "Everyone must know the intimate concerns of all the others. That is imperative." Bland Hazel studied him with deliberate chill eyes. "That hasn't a very hospitable sound," he commented. "It hasn't," Mason agreed. He said nothing further. "You would think," Bland Hazel continued bitterly, "there might be something for me to do in my own vicinity. Where I grew up." Camilla Sash trembled with a sympathetic anger. She detested her father and Elisha and, especially, Mason Hazel. She was glad he wanted to marry her; that, without her, he was lonely and wretched. If it were possible she'd make him lonelier and more wretched still. Mason was sitting beside her. He gazed at Camilla through the soft perfumed gloom, and she endeavored to appear as tender, as appealing, as she could manage. He touched her hand.

She was, then, intent upon her father, sitting stiffly with his sabred arm hanging down straight and useless. Camilla wished again that she had money of her own. Money to give Bland Hazel. Well, she would have none until Gabriel Sash was dead. That, probably, wouldn't happen for a long while; too late for Bland to find it helpful; he'd be gone from the bluegrass. The desire for her father's death returned. It was, she recognized, wicked. It amazed Camilla to discover how utterly

heartless she was toward everyone but Bland. Outwardly, Camilla knew, she was composed, placid; dull in appearance. Her family, her father, took her to be dull. Mason had said she wouldn't kill a mosquito. Camilla smiled, Mason Hazel saw that and smiled eagerly too. You fool, she thought. They were all, except Bland, fools. They didn't know her.

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Bland Hazel was absent again at supper the following evening. Elisha Abel said, "I suppose the night riders are out. Keeping up the Civil War." Gabriel Sash proceeded, "I saw Mason going into Frankfort with a shot gun. The regulators, he said, had been ordered to assemble. Perhaps Bland Hazel and Mason will see each other." Camilla was compelled to speak in Bland's defense. "Isn't that a little unfair?" she asked conversationally. "It sounds as if you thought Bland really was a night rider. That is the impression you create. Wouldn't it, if the negroes repeated it, make trouble?" Her father said that he hoped so. He turned to Elisha Abel. "This is all damned uncomfortable. I don't see how it can keep up much longer. I'll say again that trouble comes to us from the south. It's here. Make no mistake about that. I don't mind admitting I'm uneasy. I've seen enough trouble now. Heard enough guns go off. I'm satisfied." What, Elisha demanded, could be done. "Nothing occurs to me. If I asked Bland to leave Calydon, for no clear reason and after I invited him here, he would still remain in the neighborhood. Say you are right, Gabriel,

and there is to be trouble, that would only make it worse."

Elisha was, of course, correct, Gabriel Sash agreed. "At the same time it isn't comfortable. I am not usually apprehensive." He poured out a stiff measure of whisky and drank it almost violently. They could, Linda Abel added, close the house. Go away for a while, say to Europe, and come back when any threatened trouble and Bland Hazel had disappeared. That, Elisha continued, was a reasonable suggestion. Gabriel wouldn't hear of it for himself. "Go to Europe, of course," he assented; "take Camilla with you; it would do her an immense amount of good; and I'll stay at Calydon. I might leave the bluegrass but I can't be driven out of it. Not even by a border ruffian like Bland." Camilla Sash spoke with an unaccustomed firmness. "Thank you, father; I must be allowed to decide that for myself. I couldn't go abroad. Just the idea terrifies me. I have been too long at Calydon to be comfortable or happy anywhere else."

She stopped speaking, there was an oppression at her heart; her bosom, she saw, heaved perceptibly. It would be miraculous if Elisha and Linda went to Europe and made her father go with them. They would not, naturally, close the house if she remained behind. She would live there tranquilly and happily with Bland. She'd see that nothing bothered him—the food, the servants, the whole place, would be run for Bland's comfort. In the evening, just as he had declared, she would sit in a silk dress with him and listen to the marvelous story of his life. There would be no one to doubt and challenge whatever he said. When Bland got tired of that, and went into

Lexington or Frankfort or Paris, she would wait for him to return remembering, going over and over, all he had told her.

He might even—in spite of his skeptical attitude—get married. Camilla wasn't resentful of that possibility. It wouldn't, she felt, take Bland Hazel away from her. She'd keep them both, Bland and an imaginary lovely wife, and conspire to increase his happiness. Camilla had no desire for children of her own, but it would be different with Bland's. She would eventually, she was certain, come to take complete care of them. Bland's wife, Camilla went on and on, might turn into an invalid, unable to get around; she would, more probably, be a brilliant woman of the world, a star in the firmament of society. Accompany him to Louisville and Cincinnati, to Washington and Baltimore, and leave her children to Calydon and herself, Camilla Sash. They would both have marvelous tales for her when they came back to the bluegrass.

These happy thoughts accompanied her up to her room, they filled her mind when she was undressing, and fashioned bright and warm scenes in the darkness. Camilla fell asleep; she was submerged in a deep soundless tide of oblivion, when a small persistent disturbance of being assailed her. She woke and heard a light knocking on her door. She sat up, startled, in bed. "Camilla," a low urgent voice said; "Camilla." It was Bland Hazel. Camilla rose quickly and wrapped herself in a voluminous silk dressing-gown. Something is the matter, she told herself, cold and apprehensive. Holding a lighted candle she soundlessly opened the door. Bland Hazel came

quickly in. His shoes and pantaloons were covered with mud, stiff with minute tenacious burrs. His hair, too, was stiff with dried mud and burrs; his shirt, he wore no coat, was soaked with perspiration; and, worse than all the rest, on Bland's right side the shirt was dark with blood.

"I couldn't bandage it," he explained; "I didn't want to wake the servants; I came to you." Her mind and hands grew instantly steady. "I must get a basin of clear water and some linen," she explained. "Can you take off your shirt?" He tore it away, cursing at the pain that effort cost him. "You ought to have brandy," Camilla proceeded; "there is none upstairs." He replied, "To hell with brandy now. Get the water and don't stand there like a fool bothering about what I ought to have." His hurt, Camilla soon discovered, was only superficial—a flesh wound that grazed the bone of a rib. "Whatever happened to you, Bland?" she asked, firmly wrapping a linen bandage about his gaunt muscular body.

"I went to a barbecue," he replied satirically; "and drank so much Bourbon whisky, danced so hard, I just naturally broke open." That, Camilla told him, couldn't be true. "Don't be a damned idiot," he said harshly. "I was shot off my horse by one of those cursed regulators from Lexington." Camilla Sash exclaimed, "Oh, then you are a night rider!" Bland mocked her amazement. "Exactly. Only a very bright woman, like you, would have discovered that so quickly." Camilla was injured by his lack of confidence. "Why didn't you tell me, Bland?" she asked. "If you can't trust anyone else you can me. I thought you understood that." Her attitude about night riders underwent a swift change. "Bland, I don't mind

if you pay back what we owe the North. I suppose you have to do it that way. At night with masks." She was, he informed her, really a marvel of comprehension. His manner toward her, Camilla recognized, had changed—it was rougher and more direct. She liked it better than his earlier attitude. Now he would hide nothing from her.

"My horse is gone," he continued, "I hope he wasn't picked up at the wrong time. In the wrong company. Hell, I was drunk. I got drunk around Lexington and fell out of the saddle riding home. You will notice I still call Calydon home. I am afraid it is a habit time won't cure. Time won't, Camilla," he added; "but, naturally, money might. I must have walked twelve miles," he went on. "It's a damned black night. I fell into twenty ditches and got lost in a hundred berry patches. To hell with the country even if it is the bluegrass. The country is for men like Mason Hazel to scratch around in. Men who are afraid of the world." He stood up, swaying in the vague candle-light. He was, Camilla Sash realized, dizzy with fatigue and loss of blood. "You must get into bed at once," she insisted, "you near to fainted then." She opened the door and he vanished. Camilla stood lost in thought and wrapped in figured India silk.

Bland was a night rider and he had, at first, denied it to her. Then such a thing had seemed inconceivable. She began slowly to realize that, in many ways, she had been wrong about Bland. His life no longer appeared wholly romantic to her; he wasn't entirely, not altogether, a noble and misunderstood spirit. His existence had been at times, by necessity, ugly; there were traits in his character not comparable to the integrity of the Sash and Abel

bloods. That realization, she found, increased rather than diminished her adoration for Bland. His need for her was even greater than she had supposed. At once she thought more highly of both her place in his existence and of herself. There was a new dignity, an improved sense of security, in her feeling about him. She would, Camilla decided, admit that Bland had come to her for help. He had still been more drunk than not and wouldn't allow her to rouse the servants and alarm the house. He had even been a little rough. Threatening. If Bland, before she could warn him, said anything contradictory to that she would insist that his memory was unreliable. Together they could still further suspicion in the minds of her father and Elisha Abel.

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She sat quietly, the following morning, facing her father and Elisha Abel. They were clearly puzzled. "Did Bland Hazel say exactly where he had been?" Gabriel Sash persisted. "Only what I told you," she replied, "that he'd stopped at a number of places in Lexington. Too many for his good." Elisha took up the questioning. "When you put the bandage on Bland," he asked, "did you notice just how he was hurt?" She had seen that, of course. "It was deep and rough and bled a good deal. He had fallen, I think, against a fence. There were some splinters of wood in his side." It was a good thing for Bland Hazel, Gabriel went on, that he had gone to her. "Camilla, I wouldn't believe that story from anyone else alive. When Bland told it to me I laughed at him. He was

all but hung right then. Why, Mason, Mason Hazel, caught Bland's horse not a hundred yards from where they came up on the night riders. It was a lot nearer Georgetown, too, than Lexington." Camilla said nothing further. She made it plain she was tired of being examined about the night riders and Bland. It was, her manner showed, too ridiculous for description.

They left her, finally; and, going up to her room, she stopped at Bland's door to discover how he felt. He was alone, propped up in bed; almost irritably he told her to come in. "Well," he demanded, indicating the house at large, "what do they say now? Am I still in the fold or supposed to be William Quantrell himself?" The door was open upon the hall and, for a moment, Camilla listened carefully. "Mason was here this morning," she said in a rapid low voice. "He found your horse, just where you were shot, and brought him back to Calydon. They were all certain you were with the night riders until they talked to me. I did manage to change their minds. I hope," she added, "you will stop it now. You have so much to lose, everything really, if you are caught. Bland, you want to live happily, be peaceful, don't you? That is what you told me you hoped for more than anything else. They'll hang you, Bland, if they find out about the other."

"You are right, Camilla," he assented; "it is folly. The habits of war are regarded very differently in times of peace. I will break myself of them." She leaned forward and laid her hands over his. "There will be no more night riding," Bland continued. "I am done, beaten, like the South. I am sorry we will never live at Calydon like I said. For a little while I thought that dream might come

true. I will have to take up my wandering life again. The river coast. You must see I can't stay here, be a gentleman, without money. Gabriel and Elisha Abel will do nothing." She did see that. "I don't want you to go away, Bland," she said almost desperately. "Not only on my account. It's better for you here, too. I wish I could help you, Bland. Give you what you need." Tears appeared in her eyes; her voice was a small wail.

He turned over his hand and caught one of hers. "Tell me again that you would," he insisted; "if it were possible. If you could you would." Camilla Sash smiled tenderly at him. "You know that," she replied with perfect simplicity; "everything I ever have, and that you want, must be yours." He released her hand. "Perhaps you had better go," Bland Hazel suggested; "it might be a mistake for you to be seen with me too much. You realize, Camilla, how some of us feel about Union Republicans. White niggers. There has been a demonstration against Calydon already. Lately, when I was in a position of some authority, I stopped another one that was more dangerous. Now, I warn you, we can't be certain of what may happen. If you hear firing at night don't get up. Stay in your room. You must count on me to do what I can for everyone here no matter what my politics are." She said, "Don't you think Elisha ought to be warned?" He turned away from her. "Of course," Bland replied satirically, "certainly—tell Elisha Abel and your father I know the intimate concerns of the night riders."

She wouldn't, naturally, do that. At the same time Camilla was possessed by an uncomfortable secret

suspense. Bland came down to supper that evening; he treated his accident lightly and humorously. He was amazed to hear that his horse had been returned to Calydon by Mason Hazel. "Mason and a company of gentlemen were fox-hunting by moonlight," Gabriel explained; "they damned near got a fox, too; but he holed in and they couldn't find him; they had to be contented with a horse."

Bland Hazel's air of good nature and confidence in those around him expanded. "I am beaten," he admitted. "When I came back to the bluegrass I intended to spend the rest of my life here. I wanted to live at Calydon in any capacity. I see now it's impossible. There are enough without me. Calydon has left the Hazels forever." Gabriel Sash said more promptly than politely, "That is interesting news. When do you propose to go?" He had, Bland explained, some small settlements to make; when they were attended to he'd return to Louisiana. "After all," he proceeded, "I am more at home in New Orleans than in the bluegrass. I prefer the habits of a city. It is gay at night and Calydon, after nine o'clock, is like the inside of a coffin. In New Orleans there are games for any sum you might mention; music and beauty of all kinds. The reconstruction is practically over. Yes, I belong on the Grand Chemin."

A sharp pain invaded Camilla Sash; her dreams of Bland beside her for long years, of Bland's wife and children—the children she'd take care of—vanished. The real Bland, the Bland she had discovered the night of his injury, was talking. The other was no more than a sentimental vision. He was bound to leave her for New Or-

leans. Bland would never, she recognized, once more in her room, be secure. She wanted to make him safe when it wasn't possible. He would always be a stranger to security. That, however, was his charm; it was the reason why she so infinitely preferred Bland to Mason Hazel; how absurd she had been. Bland couldn't be Bland married; with children; riding over tobacco fields; inspecting Red Devon cattle. The plans she had made for him were, actually, solely for herself, for her own benefit; she had been purely selfish. It would, however, be necessary for him to have some money immediately. Eventually, Camilla supposed, he would support himself by gambling. Bland's clothes, she had noticed, had grown dreadfully shabby. He needed cambric shirts and boots and new white linen coats. His underclothes—she especially attended to them when the baskets came up from the laundry—were humiliating.

She could manage, she told herself, to buy him some fine shirts. Her thoughts were abruptly scattered by a shot that sounded at the front of the house. She could hear, then, the beat of horses' hoofs, a harsh challenging voice. "The night riders," she said aloud. The shock of surprise quickly wore away and left her apprehensive but calm. She was at least, Camilla thought, a Sash to that extent. She was, perhaps, more appalled at life than by the possibility of death however violent. Her concern fastened itself upon Bland Hazel—he was in a horribly difficult situation; attached, in reality, to both the night riders and to Calydon. There were two more shots and then five very rapid and in succession.

Bland had directed her to stay in her room, but she

opened the door and stood in an atittude of strained suspense. She heard her father's voice, cold and level, in the hall below. Camilla saw a small huddle of negroes, the house servants, in odds and ends of dress, at the head of the stairs. There were more shots; they exploded with heavy echoing crashes within the house and outside they were abrupt and clear. A complete silence returned as sharply, as dramatically, as the assault had begun. Camilla waited in the doorway; there was no further disturbance; the servants went downstairs. Camilla Sash put on the flowered silk dressing-gown, she found slippers, and followed them. A lamp was burning in the hall. The drawingroom at the left was lighted. Linda Abel, in a furred wrap, was standing beside Elisha; Gabriel Sash was lying immobile, with a drained face, on a sofa; Bland Hazel, dark and portentous, was isolated in the room. "Gabriel realized most of this," Elisha said to Bland; "he expected it. Gabriel Sash knew what you were like better than anyone else. He was wiser than the rest of us." Camilla laid her hand on Elisha's arm, "Is my father dead?" she asked. "No," Elisha replied; "but we don't know how badly he has been hurt. I have sent for Doctor Burch." Linda Abel put her arm around Camilla's waist. "We will get on some clothes," she said; "there is nothing we can do for Gabriel right away. A bullet struck him high on the head." As Camilla left the room Bland Hazel spoke. "You are an utterly damned liar," he said to Elisha.

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In her room Linda Abel shook so violently that Camilla was forced to support her to a couch. Linda was speechless. Camilla sat with a vinaigrette at her nose. Linda said, finally, that it had been too terrible for words. Elisha had come up to bed, Gabriel was still in his office busy with the affairs of Calydon, when the guns went off. Elisha hurried down, begging her to stay where she was. "I was certain he would be killed," she proceeded, "and Gabriel too. I couldn't bear to wait upstairs. I had to see about Elisha. When I reached the hall it was mostly over. Mostly, Camilla. There was something more. Worse than all the night riders in the world. Elisha didn't want me to hear it. I had to. He said Bland Hazel tried to kill Gabriel. Your father! He saw Bland shoot at him from the drawingroom door. Behind his back. Elisha almost stopped it but not entirely." Camilla rose and walked steadily to a chest of drawers and laid the vinaigrette there. Her face, her voice, were entirely composed.

"I must go now," she said. "I'll send Aurelia to you. If she isn't frightened out of her wits." Camilla sat quietly beside her father. The dawn was beginning. The candle flames in the girandoles grew pale. Gabriel Sash had recovered consciousness. His fingers twitched. He said in a dull voice, "Trouble from the south." Elisha Abel and Bland had disappeared. Servants moved about the lower floor. A mocking bird was singing divinely. Bland had tried to kill her father. Camilla knew it was true. She understood his attempt completely—it was the old bother about money. Bland needed it more than other men. He had tried desperately, through her, to make himself

secure. In a way this was her own fault, the result of her assertion that she would give Bland everything she possessed. Anything in her power. She would, Bland had told himself, let him have the money she inherited at her father's death. It was, at once, terribly clear and unendurably sad. She cried, not for her father lying perhaps fatally wounded beside her, but for Bland Hazel. Nothing, actually, could harm Gabriel Sash—he thought very little of life—his safety was beyond assault; Bland was different.

In a little while Doctor Burch arrived; he made a brief examination of Gabriel Sash and gave it as his opinion that Gabriel had suffered a slight concussion. Doctor Burch, who had been a surgeon in the Confederate army, skillful with such wounds, thought there was no acute danger. Gabriel Sash, he asserted, would recover. Camilla scarcely heard him. She went up to her room and bolted the door. Yes—she had often thought this—Bland was different from the Sashes and Abels. He was gayer. He loved to gamble and invite the presence of danger. That made him dangerous. His desires, his necessities, were so immediate and intense that he forgot to allow for the necessities, the existence, of others. Bland's only concern, she realized, was fastened upon himself. He never, for example, thought about her; he took what he needed from her, what he believed might be useful, and ignored the rest. His interest in her, in everything, was purely selfish.

She didn't, Camilla found, resent that; she was sorry for Bland. That was what made him solitary. So completely disliked. He would never attach himself to a

place; people would never be attached to him. Where she was concerned it was different—she loved Bland. If you love a man, Camilla told herself, it doesn't matter what he does. What he is. You love him. A servant brought coffee and toast, fresh figs, to her room, and later Linda Abel appeared. Her face was pallid, her eyes were hung with shadows, but she was composed. "I am glad your father is safe, Camilla," she proceeded, sitting in a stiff chair against the wall. "Gabriel is out of danger, but Elisha is in a fatal situation." Camilla demanded, "What do you mean? What fatal situation? I don't understand you." Linda closed her eyes for a moment. "Bland Hazel has challenged him," she explained; "they are to fight with pistols this afternoon. Elisha has sent for Mason and Bland says there is a man in Paris who will be his second. Doctor Burch has agreed to attend them."

"Elisha is a very good shot," Camilla Sash said mechanically. Her thoughts were far different. She thought, Bland has been worried too much. Nothing is worth that. He must be saved. She thought, Bland will kill Elisha. He killed Archelaus Hazel, his brother, together with many others, and it will be the same now. "Elisha is in a rage with himself," Linda added. "He could have shot Bland in the drawingroom door. He says a duel is nonsense. At the same time Elisha can't get out of it. Bland would post him or do something worse." The phrase repeated itself endlessly in Camilla's brain that Bland has been too much worried. Linda Abel rose and, without further words, left the room. She walked like a blind woman, colliding with a chair. Bland has been worried

too much, Camilla repeated. It must stop. It must stop for his sake. I have to see him, she told herself; I have to see Bland. It can't go on like this.

The door to his room was shut. But it was not, she found, locked. Bland Hazel was sitting at a table that held, in a long box lined with faded green velvet, a pair of pistols with graceful ivory handles. His dark hair fell across his lowered face. Camilla shut the door behind her. "I am sorry, Bland," she said, going up to him; "everything has been wrong for you." He looked up, obviously surprised. "Not for me," he replied; "but it was a shame about your father. Still there is no danger to him now. A great deal is wrong for Elisha Abel. I suppose Linda told you what he said. That will finish him. Afterwards I'll get out of this God-damned pasture. It's only fit for cattle, and farmers, Camilla." She gazed deeply into his eyes. "You have been worried too much, Bland. You must not suffer any more. I know about you and father. I would have known, I think, without a word from any one."

"Do you say I tried to kill Gabriel Sash?" he demanded.

"Yes," she answered.

He rose, cursing, and grasped her shoulder. "You are bad as Elisha," he asserted. "It's fortunate for you that you're a woman." His fingers dug into her shoulder; they hurt her cruelly; but it didn't matter.

"It will be a good day for me, and for Calydon, when I do get away," he declared. Camilla looked at the pistols. She picked one up. It was strangely cold and very beautiful. "Look out," Bland Hazel said; "I keep them loaded." Camilla drew back the chased hammer. "Look out,"

Bland said again; "I told you they were charged." She turned and smiled at him. "I love you better than anything on earth or that can be in heaven, Bland," she said. Then she shot him in the forehead.

He fell back. His body hit a high carved bedpost and slid down upon the floor. Camilla returned the pistol, still smoking, to the velvet-lined box. Then she sank down on her knees beside Bland Hazel's body. It lay with his face turned away from her. "Now, Bland," she said clearly, "you won't be worried any more. At last you are peaceful and safe. The Lord Jesus Christ understands about you, Bland. Better even than I do. He won't judge you like the world has. The sparrow, Bland, falling. Even the sparrow. Oh, God," she cried in a louder voice, "be merciful to him."

There were footsteps behind her and she rose. "I killed Bland," she told Elisha and Mason Hazel. "It was too hard for him to keep on living. You can see how quiet he is. At last." Elisha Abel bent over Bland Hazel's body. "He's dead," Elisha told them. "A ball in the exact middle of his skull. Mason, take Camilla away. Then come back. I'll lock the door while you are gone."

Camilla Sash sat at a window in her room gazing out over the wood pasture at the back of the house. Once, when she was a little girl, the forest had reached near to the window, but now, cut away space by space, it had withdrawn to a distant hill. She had played in the vanished forest with Belvard and Wickliffe and with Callam and John Hazel, with Charlotte Hazel and Murril New. But that was long ago. Before the war. Now Bland had gone,

too. She was alone. A knock fell upon her door. It was Elisha Abel. "Listen to me carefully," he directed her; "Mason Hazel killed Bland. He shot him here at Calydon. You heard nothing. That is all you know."

JOHN DIXON FOLKES stood on the lawn at Calydon the spring of 1890 and surveyed without pleasure the deep green pastures and white fences, the brush jumps and post-and-rail jumps, the grazing cattle and burnished horses with long drifting tails, that furnished a complete representation of pastoral Kentucky reaching to the far public road. He told himself that he hated America generally and, in particular, detested Kentucky. John Dixon Folkes—he was not quite nineteen—admitted further that the only countryside he did admire lay within the boundaries of France. Even there, in the one land that seemed wholly desirable to him, he infinitely preferred Paris to the provinces. He had been born in Paris; and this was the first time he had viewed the United States; it was his introduction to the birthplace of his father's people. John's grandmother, Delia Abel, had married Robert Folkes and moved from Frankfort to

Philadelphia; Robert Folkes later removed to Paris and founded the banking firm of Folkes and Mynot; and, with all the impressive Parisian families more than polite where their daughters were concerned, Robert's only son, John's father, had married Célanie Pindar of the Théâtre Français.

John venerated all he knew about his mother—she had died seven hours after his birth—to the exact degree that he disliked everything not French. Paris was her city; she had been celebrated, adored, there; and so he owned a double affection for it—because of Célanie Pindar and in itself. John Dixon Folkes's father, after his quaint matrimonial venture and Célanie's death, had almost wholly withdrawn himself from society: he grew absorbed in the affairs of Folkes and Company—extinguishing the Mynot interest—and painfully attentive to what he called the problem of his son. The elder John Folkes developed an extraordinary ambition for Delia Abel's grandson—he wanted him to leave Paris, the country of France, and return to Kentucky. There was no reason John could discover for this astounding desire, and he gave it, privately, not a particle of consideration. His father and grandfather had been greatly successful in Paris; Folkes and Company was an established conservative fact in the affairs of Europe; John Dixon Folkes, who had never seen America until, practically, his nineteenth year, was French by every conscious association, every habit and thought. That alone, it seemed to him, the most admirable of states, was the cause of his father's sheer contrariness.

His immediate journey, his presence at Calydon, was an effort to meet and overcome the attempt to establish

him in Kentucky. John had agreed to visit his father's family there and acquaint himself with the bluegrass—a rather ridiculous phrase of no possible civilized interest—in order to prove that any plan to separate him from France was futile to the point of insanity. His father had expressed it differently: the time had come, he said, for the Folkes to return to their American inheritance. He didn't, he found, want a Frenchman, the result of his own infatuation for a supreme embodiment of Paris, for a son; a consummation that future generations would do nothing to minimize. It was now or never, he had insisted. Now, the younger John said to himself, and never. Kentucky, the bluegrass, he found, was composed of almost every aspect of existence he most disliked—he was required to go about on horseback, a diversion that, until now, he had left exclusively to jockeys. He was asked to admire fields of a new white Burley tobacco, of hemp and barley; expected to drink a horrible whisky inappropriately called Bourbon; and, worse still, be part of large interminable family dinners.

The conversation on those occasions was dull beyond any descriptive phrase in his three and a half languages. It was local to the point of imbecility—endless repeated accounts of family traits and personal encounters; observations upon the weather and the quality and prospects of the tobacco crop; the various records and pedigrees of horses on the tracks in Kentucky, at New Orleans and Saratoga. John Dixon Folkes was at once entertained and irritated by the attitudes of everyone around him toward Kentucky. There was, according to them, there could be, no comparable place or people. It did no good,

he had soon discovered, to explain the splendors of France to the long dinner table at Calydon. A Lavinia Sash, whose son Belvard was manager there, might listen to him with an adequate but detached show of politeness; Linda Abel, Elisha's wife, would smile, but that was all. Elisha Abel, who owned Calydon and was John's great uncle, showed no interest at all in his accounts of Paris. Gabriel Sash, an old man with an arm hanging useless at his side, the result of a wound received in the Civil War, scarcely allowed him to finish a descriptive sentence. Old Mr. Sash was so emaciated that his face was merely a succession of bony ridges and hollows where a dry glazed skin was stretched like a coating of dark mottled varnish. He made it his especial affair, John thought, to cast doubt and ridicule on any suggestion that France was fair. Gabriel Sash referred to all Frenchmen as frogs. He had, in his aged head resembling a decayed pear, an infernally bright skeptical gaze that followed John Dixon Folkes with an unsparing satirical curiosity. Camilla Sash, a dust-colored woman at the close of middle age, who had never married, was no more important than the others. But where Susan Abel was concerned, John was forced to admit, it was different.

She was the daughter of Elisha and Linda Abel, their only child still at Calydon, and John regarded her with a secret and persistent resentment. She was his own age; there was, in a large household of grave elders, every reason for them to develop an agreement of opinions and pursuits; yet this had been made impossible by her refusal to view him seriously. Susan was, John recognized, extremely pretty, with quantities of pale hair more silver

than gold in its lights and colors; swift and engaging flushes rose in her cheeks; she had wide-opened gray eyes and her voice was open and clear, candid like her gaze. All that, and it was a great deal, was true; but her body, like her manner, was clumsy. She owned none of the instant animation, the innate sophisticated charm, that made Parisian women so vivid and desirable. Susan Abel bore no remote resemblance to Célanie Pindar. John's thoughts returned with a passionate longing, a deep nostalgia, to his mother and her entrancing world. Soon, he told himself, he would be back in France. He was, suddenly, flooded with the sounds, the voices and odors, of the Grandes Boulevards; in imagination he was strolling past the statue of Alphonse Daudet in the Parc Monceau.

The immediate actuality of Kentucky was recalled by Susan Abel's bearing where he was concerned. It would be more appropriate, John felt, for her at least to show an understanding of his worldly importance. He was a not inconsiderable part of Paris, the greatest city in all the universe, and she lived on a pasture. Simply nowhere. His grandfather had conquered the financial and social worlds of the Continent; his father married Célanie Pindar; but Susan Abel, all her family, practically speaking, had never lifted themselves out of Kentucky. They had never seen, they would never see, the great world of fashion. Their indifference to it, Susan's attitude, was the result of ignorance. His pride, however, continued to be disturbed. Here he was in the backwoods, a word new to him that perfectly described Kentucky, filled with knowledge of important, even royal, personages and events, and no one cared to hear it. Susan Abel, a girl

who was sufficiently pretty, made it evident that she preferred the clumsy antics of ploughboys.

If she had been different, he continued, turning an expressive back on the wide prospect of bluegrass and walking up to the house, if Susan had been more appreciative, he might have allowed her to bestow on him some marks of affection; given her, temporarily, the benefit of his favor. Susan was, in spite of her heaviness, rather like the sweet pink and white peaches of Provence. The little idiot did not realize the greatness of her loss: she would never, now, it was obvious, know anything at all about the possibilities of elegance and feeling. However, John reminded himself, he did not care for the robust qualities and virtues, or even the accommodating lapses, of the countryside. He could, perhaps, find pleasure in a fête champêtre, like those boldly and delicately painted by François Boucher, but never in a crude land of tobacco fields with a creature hardly better than a peasant.

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It was, at the end of April, hot as midsummer, and, late of the afternoon, John found himself walking condescendingly with Susan Abel through a wood pasture to what remained of the primitive forest on a rise behind the house. The trees were very old and there was a smell of leaf mould like the air of a remote past. Susan stopped where a clear stream with a constant small voice ran beside a tree that owned a hard gray trunk; it was, she said, a shell-bark; she hesitated, and then sat with her back against the tree. John lounged on the deep carpet of leaves

at her feet. He felt, suddenly, curiously peaceful, far away from both the surrounding presence of Kentucky and from France. "Old Mr. Sash often comes here," Susan explained; "he loves the woods. He has loved it, Aunt Camilla told me, all his life." John Dixon Folkes asked, "Do you love the woods?"

"Sort of," she admitted. "Don't you?"

That precise reply, her exact question, gave him the fullest possible opportunity to proceed in his most superior manner. "No," he said decidedly, "I do not. You see, I have lived all my life in a great city. The greatest city in the history of the world. Paris. It is finer than Rome ever was or Athens or Constantinople. I belong to its streets and cafés and theaters and houses. The woods, after Paris, would not be very suitable for me. I love beauty, beautiful buildings and lovely women in marvelous dresses. I can't live without the wines of France." Susan, it seemed to him, showed an increasing regard for his experience and life. "Tell me about the women," she demanded. They were, John replied, the wittiest in the world. "That is what makes them so marvelous—not their clothes but their wit. It is like champagne. Then, of course, they are not prudes. A Frenchwoman knows everything there is to know about love. Nothing else interests her so much. It is her life. Naturally, I don't really know—I have had no experience here—but you could hardly say American women were like champagne, could you?"

She was, at last, plainly absorbed by him. Until then, John Dixon Folkes told himself, Susan had managed to keep her interest hidden. In consequence of this

discovery he allowed his resentment to partly evaporate. "Some girls here," he declared, "are like the water in this stream, clear and nice. Yes, Susan, you are a very nice girl." Susan Abel wasn't certain, her expression showed, that she wanted to be a nice girl. Like a stream of water however clear. "I suppose a man would like the other better," she proceeded. "You are fearfully old for your age, aren't you," she added. John Dixon Folkes supposed that he was. "It has been my life," he explained; "I have lived a fearfully old life. I couldn't very well help that—I was born in Paris and my mother was Célanie Pindar. I couldn't, when you stop to think of it, be exactly innocent. Not with our position. We are Royalists," he told her importantly; "outside the banking house we have nothing to do with the Republic. The President is a pig! Yet, Susan, with all that, I am a little tired of France. I have had too much experience. Too much of everything. I am glad to be lying here at your feet in a Kentucky woods. I am glad you are cool and clear like this water. I wouldn't have you different. You are good for me." She sighed. "I reckon that is a compliment," she said. His hand softly enclosed her ankle and she promptly drew it away.

"I am glad you are what you are," John repeated. He meant that, he discovered with surprise. Suddenly he was measurably sincere. A sweet pink and white peach of Provence in cool green leaves. "After all, wit isn't very restful," he continued. "And I need rest. I need a drink of water. I'm sick of champagne. It's noisy in Paris. No one ever rests there. But it is quiet and peaceful here. In the Kentucky woods with you, Susan. You are good for

me," he repeated. "Every man, in the end, turns to a woman who is good for him. I have turned from Paris—Paris is a woman—to you." Susan Abel laughed happily. "Gracious," she exclaimed, "you sound older than Gabriel Sash." He grew sulky, once more annoyed. John turned away from her and gazed moodily at the stream. The water was saying something to the grass along the bank; he could almost distinguish what it was; not quite. The small sound of the stream was soothing. A whispered confidence.

He returned to Susan. "You don't like me," he complained; "I can't think why but you don't. Here everyone is so different from me. I feel lonely." She swiftly touched his hand with the tips of her fingers. "That is silly," Susan told him. "We may be different, but, at the same time, we are your family; you have no call to be lonely. And why do you say I don't like you? I do like you. This will make you furious—I am sorry for you." It didn't infuriate him at all.

"You are very sweet to me," John declared, capturing her hand. "If anyone could make me feel at home in Kentucky it would be you. I have thought about you a great deal," he went on, conscious of an effort to make his emotion as appealing, effective, as possible; "at night when I can't sleep." He kissed her wrist. Susan gently recovered her hand. She gazed at her wrist. "No one else talks the way you do," she admitted; "men say nice things, of course; but, somehow, they are different. What you say bothers me. It makes me unhappy." He realized all she meant, John reassured her. "You can tell by what I say, the way it sounds, my life has been dark. You

know I am lonely. I thought, until I saw you, that it would all be that way—darkened by a feeling of tragedy. My mother, remember, was a tragedienne. Greater than Rachel. I have inherited her sense of doom."

John Dixon Folkes put an arm around Susan's shoulders and drew her close to him. He said, at that moment, nothing. There was a whisper of wind high in the trees; the voice of the stream, he thought, grew louder. He could almost make out what it said to the grass. A stream in Kentucky, beside a shell-bark tree, talking to the grasses on its banks. Susan, he realized, was sweetly heavy in his arms. Young and fragrant and still. He kissed her. Her eyes were closed. She made no response. Susan's lips were cold and immobile. His heart pounded unsteadily and a new tangible desire was troubled by the flowing water. He began to hate the stream. It came between him and Susan. She was infinitely more lovely than he had recognized. "I don't want for you to kiss me," she told him. "It's like what you say and makes me unhappy. No one has ever made me unhappy before. Not this way. I want to think about it. Think what I think about it. I am not a Frenchwoman with a lot of wit."

"You are better than a Frenchwoman," John assured her. "I told you I wanted to forget them. I don't care so very much for wit." He was engaged by the beautiful feeling in his voice, the convincing honest air of his manner. It was useful to have had a great actress for a mother. "Why don't you want for me to kiss you?" he mocked her phrase. "Isn't it a natural thing to do if I love you? I do love you, Susan. I have to kiss you." Her lips were colder, more immobile, than before. "Don't

you love me a little," he demanded, holding her as closely as possible. "I won't be able to live if you don't. I can't live without you, Susan."

"Don't," Susan said, "I couldn't stand it if you did it again."

She held her hands away from him, she held her mouth away. Susan was so resolute that he rose abruptly and walked off a short distance into the woods. John Dixon Folkes stood and gazed bitterly down at the covering of dead leaves on the ground. A crude land of tobacco fields and a girl with the hard virtue, the insensibility, of a peasant. He was in a rage not so much with the interruption to his desire as he was at the fact that he had allowed it to dominate him. He had been humiliated, refused, by Susan Abel. He had, with Susan, lost the advantage of his superiority. Nothing, John informed himself, could possibly matter that happened in Kentucky; he would, now, leave the bluegrass at once; return to the more appropriate and civilized charms of Paris; but that attitude and determination failed to mend his further damaged pride. John Dixon Folkes was conscious of a new sound at his back—a faint unhappiness of crying. He returned hurriedly to Susan, and, kneeling before her, held her head against his body. His hands were buried in the smooth coolness of hair less gold than silver in its lights and colors. She said, breathlessly, "You left me. You went away into the woods. Only a little minute ago you said you couldn't live without me."

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He woke suddenly, in the middle of the night, brought back to consciousness by a sharp sense of oppression. A voice, the voice of Susan Abel, spoke clearly in his brain. "You can never leave me now," it said again. "I don't care about anything else. We are married, darling John. John, darling, now we're married." That, of course, he informed himself was—well, it was nonsense. He could not, no matter what had happened, actually marry Susan, make her part of the elaborate social existence on the Rue de Penthièvre. The sweetest provincial peach would be inappropriate there. Anyhow, he had no present intention to marry at all. It was entirely too soon. He could, he hoped, make Susan see that. It would, naturally, require diplomacy. He would speak of the beauty—yes, and purity—of their love. How perfect, in a Kentucky woods, it had been. Life, he continued to himself, was different: the beauty and pureness soon left it. Never to return. Nothing, he'd tell Susan, could spoil the perfection of their memory. A moment of complete happiness in the tragic darkness of life. The dark tragedy of life, he thought, sounded better.

The oppression, however, continued; and, born of his resentment to any discomfort, a harder reasoning took possession of John Dixon Folkes. The truth was simple —he had seduced Susan and he had no intention of paying too greatly for what, after all, was an act of no enduring consequence. Something within him, a dangerous sentimentality, might even conspire with Susan Abel to overcome his reason and that, especially, he must guard against. A number of seductions were inevitable to a gentleman's career in the great world. The fashionable

world. They had, in particular, nothing to do with marriage. Marriage was a different, a social and economic, affair. Another, a more remote voice than Susan's, set up within him—the persistent whispering of the stream, the sound of the water murmuring to its banks. A burden of dim and vague and disturbing memories. John managed, finally, to close his senses to it. He must, he realized, see Susan at once, tomorrow, and skillfully prepare her for what would seem to her a heartless desertion. It might be necessary to restrain Susan from an idiotic and frightened or even violent course. He had heard a great deal about the violence of the Sash and Abel families. Men cold and implacable like steel and pure women.

He saw Susan in the morning, on the portico at Calydon, but Belvard Sash and John's great aunt Linda were present, and he could do no more than beg her, hurried and aside, to return to the shell-bark tree late that afternoon. Meticulously dressed he proceeded to his engagement; there was a stir by the stream—Susan had arrived before him; it turned out, to his immense annoyance, to be old Gabriel Sash. He surveyed John Dixon Folkes with his customary bright and penetrating gaze. "I never thought to see you here," he observed satirically; "so far away from civilization." Gabriel Sash had a voice that resembled the stream—a monotonous sound with an occational fluctuation like the eddy of water about a stone. "I have been studying on you," he continued. "I never knew your grandmother, Delia Abel, but her brother, Manoah—Elisha's father—was close to me as two fingers on the one hand. I can be counted on to know the Sashes and Abels. Delia was more of a Cutts. But what you are

nobody could say. Yes, you are so full of airs and graces it's nigh impossible to reach down to flesh and blood. That's account of you having an actress for a mother."

"I suppose I would be like her," John answered civilly; "but not as much as I'd choose. Her air, everyone thought, was the most beautiful in Paris, and her grace was marvelous, even for France." He was thinking, when will the old idiot go; if he stays to talk it will ruin everything. "I don't blame you having a good word for your mother," Gabriel Sash admitted; "all I can see is what she left in you. Nothing of much account far as I make out. But there is good blood behind you. The best Kentucky blood and that's the finest in the world. You can't compare any other with it. Not rightly. Set somewhere; you make me nervous the way you fidget up and fidget down. Like you were expecting your sweetheart. I'll give you a piece of advice, too—don't get hopeful about the girls in the bluegrass. You are a sight too glib for around here," old Sash went on, his voice now mingled confusingly with the murmur of the stream. "You're not suited to Kentucky and Kentucky would be bad for you. The way things are," he specified. "Sit down like I told you. God's sake, it won't hurt your pants!" He sat down. "It seems to me you're not very considerable any way I look at it. A kind of Frenchified jumping jack. I wouldn't trust you around a juniper bush. But there is no getting past your blood. The best in Kentucky." That, it seemed to John, was what the stream was saying to the grass—the best blood in Kentucky. "You don't know anything," Gabriel Sash asserted; "mainly that's the trouble with you. Brought up in France. Among frogs. You

never heard rightly about the right things. The right people.

"It's likely you think this is a considerable woods you are sitting in." Gabriel Sash laughed at him. A fluctuating sound like eddying water. "Hell, it's nothing. A few trees in a pasture. The forest used to be everywhere—sugar trees and blue ash, black locust and honey locusts with thorny spikes and broad pods, elms and hickories and walnut, mulberry trees, pawpaws and buckeyes, and groves of red cedar, groves of tulip poplars higher than your mind could reach. A forest without underbrush. A level floor like you would dance on. Only there wasn't much dancing to it. Not with the Indians from the north and the Indians on the west, the French Indians—by God, Kentucky saw enough of the painted French in those days! The southern tribes helped to make life pretty, too. The Cherokees and Catawbas. Nobody ever said a word to you about them. Take my life: I was born in 1815, just after the war with England and the Canada expeditions. I didn't see them, but the Mexican war came along soon, and then the states got to fighting among themselves. The point of a sabre went in this shoulder and came out below my elbow. I lost all my sons in the Great Rebellion, Belvard and James and Wickliffe. Belvard never saw his child. He fought for the Union and so did James, but Wickliffe went with the South. He was a captain under John Morgan. General John Hunt Morgan. The greatest cavalry leader of all time."

Wickliffe, the mountain stream whispered, Wickliffe. Wickliffe Sash.

The sound of the stream grew louder, it was both loud

and remote; it had the continuous broken volume of a waterfall. A whip-poor-will called in the gathering dusk. A mountain of rock rose from the edge where, sick with weariness, he was standing. The men of his company, he saw, were practically incapable of another step. They waited behind him along the high ravine in fantastic attitudes of exhaustion and a semblance of order. "Fall out," he commanded them. His men collapsed where they stood. He said to Major Diamond, "I don't like the way the men look. They are not taking care of themselves." What, Major Diamond inquired, could he expect. "A hundred and fifty miles of these mountains in seven days. Worse than twenty miles a day climbing in formation. Some left Huyter's Gap hardly more than a week ago. More than two hundred miles anyhow."

What day was it?

It was the seventh of June in 1864.

General Morgan's command had reached Pound Gap the second, dislodging a small Union force guarding that entrance to Kentucky. The General absolutely counted on investing Mount Sterling tomorrow. By God, he had no time to lose! When it was discovered that Morgan was again raiding in Kentucky—it must be known to the Union headquarters tomorrow—there would be an overwhelming concentration of troops upon him. General Averill and General Crook were on the march. General Burbridge would not linger in the east. John Morgan, at best, had twenty-five hundred men. His success depended upon the race between him and the Federal commanders for the center of the state. The odds against General Morgan, Wickliffe Sash knew, were not important. This

was his fourth raid into Kentucky and he had always been opposed to enormous majorities of men and arms. The best, however, belonged to the past, to the first and second raids and even to the disasterous third raid across the Ohio river. Yes, it was different now. It was different, worse, with the whole Confederacy.

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Wickliffe Sash, sitting on a cold rock in the fast gathering dusk, his body one intolerable ache, said to himself, We are licked. On his left the kitchen fire made a sullen glow. He could see the fires of other companies ahead of him. There was an occasional call and the distant scrape of horses' hoofs; infrequent moving figures. The brigades were largely silent. The familiar strains of Stump-tailed Dolly and of General Stuart's favorite song, If you want to have a good time jine the Cavalry, were wholly absent. He had a battered tin cup of coffee, a thin segment of bread no better than a burned paste of dough and bacon boiled without greens. Lieutenant-colonel Martin requested his presence; Wickliffe found him with Alston, who commanded the Second brigade, Colonel Giltner and General Morgan. Morgan, Wickliffe Sash believed, had never recovered from his imprisonment in the state penitentiary of Ohio. His voice was sharp and his periods short:

The command was to advance at daybreak. Its purposes, as usual, were diverse. Captain Jergens, with fifty men, would be detached to destroy the Frankfort and Louisville Railroad bridges. Major Chenowyeth would

burn the bridges of the Kentucky Central steam road. Captain Sash, familiar with the ground about Lexington, General Morgan required to proceed ahead with messages of his intentions to Confederate supporters in Fayette county. A strong sense of impending fatality accompanied Wickliffe back to his company. The men were sleeping on the bare rocky ground of the Rebel Trace. His thoughts attached themselves to his cousin, Charlotte Hazel. In a very short while now he would be with her again for a few hours. Would this, he speculated, be a good time for their marriage? Mason Hazel, who had been forced by the death of his father to remain at Greenland, would be able to secure a preacher, sympathetic to the South, for the ceremony.

The morning was a formless gray space—infinitely depressing—of physical agony at any further movement, and then the sun enveloped Wickliffe Sash in a blaze of transcendent glory. The mountains fell away behind him; the gloomy ascents and stone precipices dissolved; below him lay a wide and brilliant and pastoral plain. There were, everywhere, noble groves and woodland meadows deep in grass and shaded by aged sugar trees and elms and hickory and tulip poplars; he saw orderly pastures with whitewashed fences where horses burnished by the sun were slowly grazing with flowing manes and tails beside Red Devon cattle like animals in dark copper. The pastures were woven with crystal streams; houses, tranquil and white, stood among tall trees with lawns falling away in slopes and terraces of flowers; and everywhere the grass was bluer than green.

An intolerable sharp pain of recognition and longing,

of relief, struck into Wickliffe. "By God," he said out loud, "the bluegrass." The peace and loveliness of the land below him, the great houses among the trees and the small houses along the roads, with the morning sun rising from their chimneys, wet his face with sudden involuntary tears. It was the bluegrass! Here was home. The privations and terrors of war, the brazen noise and hailing iron and lead, the swift silent perils, appeared to have been lost with the mountains. No one, on that vast sweet plain of happiness and plenty, could need food or shelter or security. Wickliffe, as General Morgan had acknowledged, knew it intimately—he had caught innumerable silvery fish in its innumerable clear silver rivers; he had shot quail and woodcock in all its thickets; squirrels and wild turkey in the woods and clearings; there was hardly a house of consequence where—before the war when he was a boy—he had not danced to the fiddling of negroes and added to the gayety of the barbecues.

Wickliffe, Wickliffe Sash, the stream whispered.

The murmur of water was taken up and made articulate by old Gabriel Sash. "Wickliffe was killed at Cynthiana," he said. "Isham Rose, who was in the Forty-fifth Union cavalry and afterwards married Charlotte Hazel, brought him home. Shot through the head by a pistol ball." John Dixon Folkes was silent. He sat beside Gabriel Sash at the foot of the aged shell-bark tree and gazed into a stream murmuring to the grasses along its banks. Wickliffe Sash, he considered, had been fortunate—squarely killed by a pistol ball in a great war when he was young. Young and, probably, in love. Luckier, for example, than

Isham Rose, who had brought Wickliffe home, and was now living at Greenland with his wife Charlotte. An uninteresting man and a fat uninteresting woman. John remembered, now, seeing a small framed daguerreotype of Wickliffe Sash in the drawingroom at Calydon—a dark boy with hair carefully brushed away from a thin intent face. All the Sashes, all the Abels, had gaunt faces. He, John Dixon Folkes, had such a countenance.

"Your great grandfather, Manoah Abel, was born at Bardstown," Gabriel Sash informed him. "His mother was Mary Delaunay, a Catholic. He practiced law with James Sash in Frankfort and came to be a lawyer of great importance in the state. He was in love with Nancy Sash, James's daughter, but she wouldn't take him, and afterwards he married Susan, one of the New York Cutts. A splendid woman. Nancy wouldn't marry Manoah because he killed Jarrot Bensalem. Nancy begged him not to but he did just the same. Jarrot had murdered James Sash. Cut him to death with a knife on the street. James was unarmed." That, John Dixon Folkes told himself, was barbarous, without the honorable circumstances of a duel. It would not be possible, it wouldn't be decent, to let Jarrot Bensalem keep on living.

The late afternoon became golden; there was a sound like the humming of honey bees; an insuperable sweetness of roses, a close stillness, enveloped him. The stream grew wider; it lost its murmur in the placidity of a river flowing dark and slow through a summer dusk. The voices of children, of Sara McKee and Gabriel Sash, rose clear and thin from the river pool where they were bathing. Caroline, a nurse, took them away to bed, and Manoah

Abel, sitting on a slope of grass where white violets were still blooming, heard light footsteps behind him. It was Nancy "What did you do today?" she inquired, at his side. There had been a decision in the Federal Court, he answered; favorable to him. Tunstall against the Frankfort Bridge Company. She hesitated, then spoke again. "Manoah," Nancy Sash went on, "when is the trial?" He told her that Jarrot Bensalem's trial was arranged for the sixth of July, two weeks off.

"If Mr. Bensalem goes free what will happen?" she demanded.

The silence that followed her question was long and profound. Manoah gazed fixedly out over the river. "Please answer me," Nancy insisted. "I don't know," he admitted. She had to ask that, she explained. "I didn't want to. I don't want to at all. Manoah, if Mr. Bensalem gets off will our family do anything about it? It wouldn't, with men like ours, be unlikely." That, he protested, was not a question proper for her to ask. "Women should have nothing to do with such things. It isn't becoming."

"Mostly you would be right," Nancy agreed. "This is special. Special, you see, because it's about my father." The cold edge of a premonitory dread oppressed him. "Manoah," she continued, "you have almost told me what I was afraid of. What I hated to know. You were closer to him than anyone else; you would be the first to make Mr. Bensalem pay for what he did. Darling, if father had been different perhaps I'd want you to kill him. Even if he killed you. That isn't sensible but you see what I mean. If father were different. But you knew him too. You understand how he hated everything that was violent.

He wouldn't want any member of his family to shoot Mr. Bensalem on his account." That, Manoah Abel told himself, was wholly true. Nancy put her arm around his; she pressed his arm into her warm body. "You mustn't do it Manoah," she said. "Promise me now you won't. Manoah, if you did I could never marry you."

The sound of frogs rose persistent and mournful along the river bank. The eastern sky faded through a faint rose to a clear green. The earth darkened. "Sometimes," Manoah said unhappily, "there are obligations greater than any individual necessity. More than any man's hopes." He felt a shiver pass over her. Nancy freed herself from him and rose. "I don't like it here," she told him. "The frogs—." Nancy wound her arms around him and drew herself up, a warm and distracting weight, upon his body. "You won't hurt us," she whispered; "father and me. We don't know what we would do without your help and love."

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The streets of Frankfort, on the day Jarrot Bensalem was found not guilty of murdering James Sash, were filled with crowds of men and loud angry argument. Manoah, in his law rooms, moved to a window opening on Broadway, where he watched the somber passing throngs. The procession of faces was grim. Intent angry faces and the hard pressure of men's bodies. Their solidarity, their primitive singleness of mind, overwhelmed him. A profound calm, born of a detached and irrevocable sense of order, settled upon Manoah Abel. There were, he hope-

lessly repeated, obligations greater than any individual necessity: he proceeded over Lewis Street to the Bush Tavern, where he inquired for Mr. Bensalem. Mr. Bensalem, he was informed, was above. His nigger had just carried up his hot water. Manoah knocked at the door indicated to him, and, with no more formality, he entered. Bensalem, naked except for underdrawers and red Turkish leather slippers, had his back to the room. The servant stood ready to shave his master. Jarrot Bensalem turned. He took a single step to a stand beside his bed.

"There is nothing honorable in this," Manoah said; "it's common execution." He raised his pistol until it covered a bare left breast and fired.

"That," Gabriel Sash asserted, sudden and thinly harsh, "was the fix Manoah was in." John Dixon Folkes was startled. The old man, the shell-bark tree, the stream, all seemed immaterial. "Yes," Gabriel Sash repeated, "it was like that. I always thought Nancy's mind was some turned on her father; anyways no doubts were left once she made it up. Manoah knew that. The day he went from his office looking for Jarrot Bensalem it was goodbye forever to Nancy Sash. There is a story in the family he saw her before he went to jail. Time wasted. He got off soon as the Circuit Court met."

"He had to do it," John Dixon Folkes cried; "Manoah had no choice. You must see that." In his excitement he rose and stood facing Gabriel Sash. "If he had listened to Nancy he would have lost her as well. She'd had to hate him and he would hate himself. Nancy could never have had a particle of regard for Manoah afterward." Old Gabriel Sash studied him gloomily. "You know too

much about women," he declared. "That isn't healthy. It isn't right. I've been watching you and noticed it before." Where, John wondered, was Susan Abel. She might not have been able to come to the woods, see him, that afternoon. "Well," Gabriel Sash continued, "one way or the other Manoah Abel did lose Nancy; he married Susan Cutts; so you were born in Paris instead of a respectable place. Sit down. You have no call to shout at me. You don't know anything about this.

"Women never signify much in the affairs of the Sashes and Abels. Take James Sash, that Jarrot Bensalem killed —he carried his second wife right out of the Convent of Loretto, but that wasn't the main thing about him. Except you look at it in the way of a mistake: a woman never done with complaint who left her responsibilities and children to be a nun again right after her husband's death. James fought through all the wars there were in his time and that was plenty. When he was mustered out of the army in 1813 he was a brevetted colonel. James was with Green Clay and his three thousand men at Fort Meigs. He joined General Harrison and beat the British at the River Thames, where Tecumseh was killed. Before that, in 1792, he was together with Major Adair nigh Fort St. Clair. Even you might have heard how the Indians licked them then. The next year James and General Scott and Wayne were north of Cincinnati. James Sash stayed at Greenville all winter, helping to build Fort Recovery; and in August, it was 1794, they won the battle of Fallen Timbers. James didn't think much of fighting either. He was one of the few who escaped from beside the River Raisin."

Far away from that disaster, listening to the voice of an old man like the fluctuating sound of the stream at his feet, a stream that whispered to the grasses trailing in the clear brimming water, he was still overcome with its horror. It had followed the capture of Frenchtown; the English retreated before the first assault of Kentucky troops; but holding Frenchtown was a far different undertaking. There were several things Colonel James Sash could not fathom about the American situation. For example, no sentinels had been posted on what must be the main way of the enemy's approach; and why Colonel Wells stationed his men outside the defenses, the stockade, James had no idea of. Wells, he considered, was pointedly inviting calamity. It soon followed. There was a sudden hateful screaming of savages; the British and Indians swept forward; Wells's small force was surrounded.

Colonel Allen shouted to James Sash, "We can't let the Indians have them. We must make a sally. Call for volunteers." The volunteers were instantly available; a body of men under Allen and Colonel Lewis and James Sash left the comparative safety of the stockade and charged to the relief of Wells; a hundred of them, at least, were killed at once. Colonel Allen was shot through and through, an Indian whose face was painted in ashes bent over Allen with a knife. He rose tearing Colonel Allen's bloody scalp from a broken and mutilated skull. Lewis was tomahawked; James dragged him back to the defenses.

The Indians and British gathered in overwhelming numbers about the fortifications of Frenchtown. Proctor,

for the English, sent the Kentuckians promise of safe conduct in return for immediate surrender. James Sash was skeptical; it was better, he considered, to die in honorable warfare, defending to the last their fatal position. Surrender, however, seemed imperative. Perhaps General Proctor would keep his word; restrain his Indian allies. Neither occurred. Drunken Indians murdered the soldiers leaving the stockade; Indians cut them in shocking deaths on the streets. They hacked at the Americans and collected their scalps. James heard the yells of savages burning a house filled with wounded Kentucky soldiers; they killed with tomahawks and knives the helpless Kentuckians in the stone cellar of a tavern. An Indian, too drunken to be actually dangerous, shot at James, and James took the musket from him. He knew some English terms and James Sash, with his saddle bags for bribe, persuaded the Indian to guide him back to General Harrison's impotent command.

In the forest the guide was undecided about their course; twice he vanished among the trees and reappeared at James Sash's back. The Indian disappeared again, and James stopped behind a barrier of immense fallen trees rotting through countless cycles of years. That time, with the Indian slipping eagerly and swiftly forward, James Sash buried his knife in the copper-colored side. The savage died without a sound, with proud set lips and dim eyes. The forest was profoundly silent except for the murmuring voice of a stream. Clear running water and banks of troubled grass. One less Indian James told himself with a grim pleasure. One less Indian, the stream reiterated. One Indian less, John Dixon Folkes thought,

satisfied and brutal. He could still feel the shock of the knife plunged into a human body.

Gabriel Sash sat gazing with fixed eyes into what was left of the forest. John was once more facing the moment when, with Colonel Allen and Colonel Lewis, James Sash left the stockade at Frenchtown to support Wells's unhappy force. They set their feet without hesitation on the way to death. A simple and unremarkable act of obligation. An obligation, John Dixon Folkes realized, that each man contained within himself. They owed their hopeless sally to inner necessities which made their living decent. He began to see that, because of such necessities and men, Kentucky assumed a solid value; it was a land, a state, built out of certain durable and reassuring qualities—unassailable courage and an utter simplicity of mind. Its virtues, as well as its faults, were the result of early bitter hardship and danger; the first spark was struck by the flint, the determination, of a few men from Virginia and North Carolina and the steel tomahawks, the knives, of raiding Indians. It had, because of that long desperate struggle, a pastoral desire for peace, for white houses and brick houses and houses of Kentucky limestone set in tranquil groves and surrounded by green meadows; for Red Devon cattle like animals in dark copper and burnished horses with drifting tails and manes. The forest, then, had retreated; its place was taken by woodmeadows and deep pastures of bluegrass; but the approach of peace, it seemed, was always to be delayed.

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"It goes back to Gabriel Sash, the Long Hunter," the old man asserted. "He came from the Holston country with Colonel Knox in 1769. That was the beginning of the Sashes and Abels in Kentucky. At Harrodstown. Isaac Mace, Beriah's son—his grandmother was Kate Abel—had it all in his head. Twenty men left Reedy creek with Knox and traveled by Cumberland Gap and the Great Warrior's road to Flat Lick. There were tall cliffs there and mountainy hills and everything else you could put a name to. But mostly briars and wild grape vines. They camped in Price's Meadow and built a depot, agreeing to come back every five weeks. Gabriel Sash hunted with John Rains and Obadiah Terrell through high grass you could never reach to the end of. Caves with human bones and salt licks with bones bigger than a man's body. Some of the hunters went home; but a parcel stayed; Gabriel Sash was one of them; they built two boats and two trapping canoes and went on down the Cumberland.

"By God, they went down the Mississippi river clear to the French fort at Natchez. Gabriel Sash came up through the Indian country alone and joined Colonel Knox and Richard Scaggs and one or two more on Laurel river. They went west and met a party of Cherokees. It wasn't a war party and the chief sent them up a creek and beyond a bushy ridge, and, like he promised, they chanced on the prettiest river in the world. Deer and bear and buffalo on the meadows and in the skirt of the woods. Joseph Drake discovered Drake's pond. A great place for deer. Isaac Bledsoe found a good salt lick. Gabriel had a mind to see Harrodstown." The recital of lost primitive days and men went on in a voice that, for John Dixon

Folkes, had become wholly disembodied. It might have risen from the grave of the past it was describing. The air was filled with a sudden murmur of leaves. A lonely sound, he thought. The forest was lonely around him. There was a thin cawing like crows; instantly rigid he listened with all his faculties alert. For a long while he stayed motionless; then on soundless moccasins he slipped forward through a stately world of ancient trees.

His mind to see James Harrod's town on the Salt river, at Big Spring, brought Gabriel Sash out of the forest at the end of a spring day. He was surprised by the buildings and extent of Harrodstown. Twenty cabins—some of them double—at least. The fort had two rows of cabins, their outer walls joined by a high picket, small block-houses with projecting second stories occupied the four corners, the wicket was strongly barricaded. There were paths and cleared spaces before the cabin doors; Gabriel even saw some bright planted flowers. His manner was doubtful in the face of so much civilization; the inhabitants of Harrodstown, he was convinced, must view him as hardly better than a red Indian. Gabriel Sash, however, was received with a reassuring cordiality—it was evident they recognized in him a hunter and Indian fighter of welcome ability. He drank a great many hospitable noggins of whisky and told over and over again the adventures of the Long Hunters. He was pressed to stay in practically every cabin of Harrodstown; and he laid down, one night, to sleep in a room, but sleep refused to overtake him. Gabriel was first restless and then uneasy. He was, actually, skeered. He didn't know what might not happen to him shut up like that. In the end he rose and

went quietly out to the edge of the forest, where, wrapped in his blanket, he slept peacefully until dawn. He was, at once, engaged and troubled by Harrodstown. It was too crowded for either comfort or safety—there were men everywhere. Ladies with children. He couldn't make out what was in the men's minds; Gabriel Sash especially didn't like it when they came up behind him. Once he had whirled with a ready knife and close to frightened an old man out of his shirt. Gabriel's fingers were never far from the handle of his tomahawk.

James Abel took him home for supper, and there, when the strangeness of so much formality, so many people, wore away, he was at ease, drinking whisky and describing still again the years he'd spent in the Kentake forest. The family of James Abel included his wife, Sara, a thin woman who cooked tolerable good; a girl, Nancy, with staring eyes; three younger sisters and two little boys. Beside them there was John Abel, James's brother. He had just arrived from Redstone Old Fort, by way of the Monongahela and Ohio rivers; he was a lawyer and Virginian, and considerable set on himself. Gabriel Sash secretly attended Nancy. She was a right sharp girl, he could see; it was plain she headed her family. Watching her he suddenly realized that he was lonely.

There was a mild strawcolored moon.

What, after all, did his life amount to? All he did was trap in the woods, along the rivers, and mark Indian sign. He would never own anything, get anywhere, like that. The supper table bright with tallow dips, spread with bear meat and salt raised biscuits with butter and honey and milk, little boiled cakes called wonders, was con-

siderable pleasant. He liked the clatter of human voices, the warmth of human sympathy. Gabriel returned to the Abel cabin for dinner the following day, and sat with Nancy by a stream where there was a great old shell-bark tree. "It's nice here," he admitted, half lying at Nancy's feet and dropping small twigs and stones into the brook. "It might be you," he said. "I have never took notice to girls. That wouldn't be right. I got no life a girl could manage with." She smiled at him uncertainly. "Some yes and some no," she replied. "You might change, too. Perhaps you'll come to like the settlements." His hand closed on her ankle, formal in a yellow stocking. Gabriel's feeling of loneliness, of futility, returned twentyfold stronger.

Nancy, he told himself, would drive it out of him. He married her, holding her as closely as possible to him; and, it seemed, his confidence in her, in marriage, was justified. At first he did a great many things around their cabin on the road from Harrodstown to James Harrod's station; domestic labors that men and hunters usually left to women; but soon, under an increasing sense of the impropriety of such activities, he allowed Nancy to perform them. She bore the buckets of water from the spring; Nancy moved the loads of ashes for soap making; he sat on his heels, motionless and silent, smoking a small sandstone pipe with a reed for a stem, while she repaired the clapboard roof of the cabin. Nancy grew right spindling; then she told him they were going to have a child. "It's nature," Gabriel said briefly, his pipe in hand. Then he resumed smoking.

His old familiar preferences and habits returned—Gabriel Sash left his cabin early in the morning and came

back with dusk, bearing without fail a wild turkey or a side of venison or a load of fresh bear meat. It was spring again, May, and he sat in his doorway always silent and always smoking. Nancy Sash sang to the child against her breast:

"When Joseph was an old man, an old man was he,
He married Virgin Mary, the Queen of Galilee."

It was, by rights, a pretty picture, and Gabriel tried to fasten his thoughts on his wife and child. They slipped treacherously away to the forest. He dwelt upon the buffalo trace to the Lower Blue Lick and the flats along the river filled with buffalo, the elk around the salt springs. He studied on how Joseph Drake might be making out at Drake's pond and considered upon Indians. He grew bitter about Nancy's family; he particularly distrusted her uncle, John Abel. He was suspicious of all book-learned people. Gabriel wouldn't, he asserted, have a book in his cabin. Unless chance it was a Bible. Even where Bibles were concerned he preferred the French habit of letting the priests read and tend to them. Nancy disagreed with him. She wanted for their son to be a lawyer or a trader.

"Why don't you put it Cherokee or Delaware?" Gabriel demanded. "He'd be as good one as the other. I'd likely kill a boy who favored John Abel. If he was my son. Look at Harrodstown now," Gabriel Sash proceeded, with an uncommon vigor of speech; "there are so many in it, and all talking to onct, you can't make out what any says. It's not like an Indian council. There is some order with that; around here it sounds like a lot

of turkey gobblers. Then there is too many wimmin. What you want is rifles and not wimmin." He stopped abruptly, returned to a customary and incurable silence; and the following night—for the first time since his marriage—he did not return to the cabin until morning.

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Nancy met him at the door without a word of reproach. Breakfast was ready. Gabriel Sash took a preliminary deep drink of whisky from the half cask in a corner of the room. There was johnny-cake baked on a white ash board. Nancy had made him a new hunting shirt worked with quills dyed yellow from a walnut bark, blue from boughten indigo and red with madder. Gabriel ploughed the land for Indian corn and sowed the seed, he planted musk melon and turnips; and, working in his field, an utter distaste possessed him for the cultivation of the earth and for his orderly existence. He rested and gazed at the forest, everywhere enclosing his cabin and Harrodstown. That was where he wanted to be—back in the woods beside Dick's river with Joseph Drake. He remembered the fires of the past—the bright embers without smoke to betray his presence—when he cooked strips of venison twisted around the end of his ramrod. The great flocks of wild pigeons settled calling in the trees at dusk and the cardinal birds sang with the dawn. Fields bright with cardinal flowers. He had waked up in cold freshets of spring water and with winter snow covering him like a blanket. The changes, the excitement, of Indian sign again pursued Gabriel Sash—he was good

as an Indian in the woods any day. He had killed aplenty of them. The stinking bastards. But it was a question if he were better than an Indian. I am lower still, he thought. I am the lowest mortal man in Kentucky.

He hated the settlement, he discovered; a fear of it, always latent in his mind, became acute. Gabriel viewed his wife and child with concern. The child, he acknowledged, he was responsible for; he had married, sworn to love and cherish, Nancy; but all that, now, had no reality to him. It had no power over him. His memories of the forest, his necessity for it, were stronger. His silence grew morose. Nancy Sash, he could see, was nigh bothered to death. That meant nothing to him. Nancy and little James, he argued with himself, would be better off if he went away. He would never be successful with them. He'd never own anything but the clothes on his back, his rifle and powder horn, the bullet pouch and scalping knife and tomahawk. He had never, until now, had more.

The miserable details of his childhood in the Yadkin country returned to harass him further—he was the result, his mother had often, sufficiently bitter, explained, of a single drunken night. His father vanished as promptly with the morning as he had arrived late the evening before. Sash was the name of Gabriel's mother. Through all his early years there had been a succession of such informal arrivals and hasty departures. Innumerable drunken nights and men nameless except for affectionate or hard terms of description. The activities, the pleasures, in the cabin had soon driven him out to sleep on the ground and in the woods; the scarcity of food showed Gabriel how to catch trout with a bare hand and snare small animals.

Before he was twelve he had collected enough peltries to own a gun. Three years later, in a passion of desire for a girl with yellow curls and a soiled white face, he had beaten to death the older admirer she preferred.

Then, like his father, he vanished into the secretiveness and refuge of the forest. The dangerous forest protected him, it saved him from the organized revenge, the law, of the settlements. He had learned, except where his comfort was involved, to put no dependence on women. All trace of paternity in him had been destroyed. His existence, Gabriel Sash recognized, was a ceaseless warfare. He understood nothing else. At the same time he was consumed by a tyrannical restlessness, the perpetual need to find a land beyond any he knew, a land so far away that it held no qualities at all of the past.

The old man seated with John Dixon Folkes between the shell-bark tree and the stream said, "He left them, Nancy and little James." They both fell silent. A sharp unhappiness overtook John; it changed into a definite sense of the insecurity of life: almost nothing in it, he discovered, was dependable. The elements, the quality, of destruction in himself were appalling. There was, for example, a disturbing resemblance between that first Gabriel's unspeakable mother and the divine Célanie Pindar. They were—worlds apart—equally indifferent to all responsibility. To the decency of order. Gabriel Sash, in consequence, had lost himself in the darkness of the forest. He had returned, like a savage, to the life of savages and of wild beasts. Well, Paris, in its own manner, was a forest. The blood of his mother was restless in him; suddenly he was afraid of it; he was conscious of

other influences: John Dixon Folkes viewed the slow painful accumulation of a tradition; he had looked back into the past, at the bare lives of his ancestors, and seen them change with the changing state, he had watched them change Kentucky. The lives of his ancestors, one following the other, passionate and courageous men, generations of women with pure hearts, had created at least a substitute for a missing safety: they had learned how to meet disaster. They were calm, established in their arbitrary conceptions of right and wrong, in the face of death. The men and women whose beings had gone into his being had left a tangible stronghold—like the stockade at Harrodstown—ready for him to occupy; he could not, there, be readily destroyed.

Dusk was filling the contracted woods, but the meadows were brimming with a subdued light. Gabriel Sash, infinitely old, got up painfully; he gazed about with a disturbed lost expression; without further word he walked away in a rapid shamble. I must, John told himself, go back to Calydon; he did not, yet, stir. In place of a conclusion, an abstract determination, following upon all that filled his mind, he had a vision of Susan Abel. Sweet like a peach in a cool green Kentucky existence. But she was, even more than imminent and warm, the perfect symbol of his obligation and safety. He couldn't desert her now because he was incapable of deserting himself. What he discovered himself to be. John Dixon Folkes had, it appeared, more concern for that than for Susan. The fact that he had seduced her was unimportant; marriage was not a retribution for passion; he had committed himself to a greater responsibility. He had, by an act more irrev-

ocable than the promise of words, brought Susan to believe in his integrity. She depended on that, and he would not multiply the evasions and lies that made up the treachery of living.

He found Susan in the hall. She seemed very young in a white dress and broad dark blue sash. There were, however, shadows on her eyes. She said at once, "Everybody came from Greenland. I couldn't get away. It worried me most frightfully. You see, I didn't know what you would think. About me, I mean. You might worry." Susan touched his face with swift tender fingers. "I didn't want you to worry. To be sorry for anything. I haven't. I'm not. What I gave you was yours. It was yours anyhow and always. From the first. I wasn't certain you knew that. How much it was and how it was yours. I am not afraid, John. If I am bad I don't mind being bad. Only you can say if I am. Am I, John?" No, he said, she wasn't bad. Suddenly he was transcendently happy at the possession of a fidelity at least equal with her own.

"We will," he told Susan, "live in Kentucky."

John Dixon Folkes sat at the long dinner table of his family in America and listened, comfortably, to the accounts of family traits and personal encounters, the observations on the weather and quality and prospects of the tobacco crop, that made up the immediate conversation. He half attended the various records and pedigrees of horses on the tracks in Kentucky, at New Orleans and Saratoga. He would never, he realized, care greatly for racing. He had not decided what, in the bluegrass, would occupy him. Probably finance, in Louisville, or politics over the counties. "Where," he asked, "is old Mr. Sash?"

Old Mr. Sash, it developed, had suddenly become too weak for even the mild affair of supper. He was in bed. Lavinia, who had married Belvard, Gabriel Sash's son, was with him.

Early of the morning he died. There was a subdued stir through the house at Calydon; the arrival and departure of carriages, of men on horse, at the portico. John Dixon Folkes, in a light that grew rapidly brighter, met the successive related men and women at once strange and deeply familiar to him. The dead old man in the east drawingroom, he thought, the shell of the Long Hunter, had made valid in him whatever was reassuring in their blood.

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JOSEPH HERGESHEIMER

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